



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

Darren Tilley – Chief Executive & Town Clerk
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13th November 2024

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend the **Meeting of the Braunstone Town Council** to be held in the **Council Chamber** at Braunstone Civic Centre on **Thursday 21st November 2024** commencing at **8.00pm** for the transaction of the business set out below.

Alternatively, members of the public may observe this meeting, and make contributions under the Public Session item, using Zoom video and web conferencing software (details below).

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86219320417?pwd=xdRKb3a8CzEN7veyYPaXzO1BCge3.1>

Meeting ID: 862 1932 0417

Passcode: 020291

Yours sincerely,

Darren Tilley
Chief Executive & Town Clerk

To: The Town Mayor and Members of Braunstone Town Council.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
2. **Disclosures of Interest**
To receive disclosures of Interest in respect of items on this agenda:
 - a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests,
 - b) Other Interests (Non-Pecuniary).
3. **Minutes**
To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 26th September 2024 to be signed by the Chairperson (**Enclosed**).
4. **Public Session**
Members of the public may make representations, give evidence or answer questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda. At the discretion of the Chairperson the meeting may be adjourned to give members of the public present an opportunity to raise other matters of public interest.
5. **Co-Option to Vacancy on the Council**
To note that no expressions of interest were received to be co-opted as a member to fill the vacancy on the Council for the Millfield Ward (**Enclosed**).
6. **Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning**
To set out the context for the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (**Enclosed**).
7. **Announcements**
To receive announcements/reports (if any):
 - a) Town Mayor,
 - b) Leader of the Council,
 - c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk.
8. **County and District Councillor Reports**
To receive reports from the Town's elected representatives on:
 - a) Leicestershire County Council
 - b) Blaby District Council
9. **Questions from Councillors**
To answer questions from Councillors where notice has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.11 (if any).

10. Reports of Standing Committees

To receive reports and minutes of Standing Committees (**Enclosed**):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------|
| a) Community Development Committee | 10/10/2024 | p8056 |
| b) Planning & Environment Committee | 31/10/2024 | p8062 |
| c) Policy & Resources Committee | 07/11/2024 | p8082 |

11. Motions on Notice

To receive and consider motions moved on notice in accordance with Standing Order 4.13 (if any).

12. Sealing of Documents

To authorise the sealing of documents (if any).

Next Scheduled Meeting: 8pm, Thursday 30th January 2025.

*Deadline for submission of Questions on Notice and Motions on Notice:
12noon, Tuesday 21st January 2025.*



NOTE:

*CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime and Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.
EQUALITIES ACT 2010*

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- *eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;*
- *advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;*
- *foster good relations between different groups*

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

26th SEPTEMBER 2024 at 8.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Kennedy (Town Mayor), and Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Nick Brown, Garry Dulon, Andrew Evans, Richard Forrest, Sam Fox-Kennedy, Leanne Lee, Rebecca Lunn, Sam Maxwell, Tracey Shepherd, Darshan Singh, Christiane Startin-Lorent, and Mark Widdop.

Officers in Attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk and Pauline Snow, Deputy Chief Executive & Community Services Manager.

There were 2 members of the public present at the meeting.

COUNCILLOR PAUL KENNEDY, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

The Town Mayor led the Council in a minute's silence to remember Mr Bhim Kohli, resident, who had tragically died following an incident at Franklin Park. Councillor Nick Brown expressed the Town Council's deepest condolences and best wishes to the family at this very difficult time.

6252 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Alex Dewinter, Gary Sanders, Satindra Sangha, Marion and Robert Waterton.

6253 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

6254 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 27th June 2024 were circulated (item 3 on the agenda).

It was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Leanne Lee and was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 27th June 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

6255 Public Session

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were two members of the public present, both relatives of Mr Bhim Kohli. The Council were thanked for the support offered to the family following the tragic incident on 1st September 2024 at Franklin Park.

6256 Co-option to Vacancy on the Council

A Notice of vacancy in the Office of Town Councillor was published on 26th June 2024 for the Millfield Ward, following the resignation of Sevim Aslan. A request for an election was not received within the required 14 days.

Public elections would not be held until May 2027; therefore, for the interim period the vacancy could be filled by co-option, voted for by the incumbent members of Braunstone Town Council.

Standing Order 4.9a sets out that “the Council will publicise that it intends to co-opt to the vacancy at the next meeting of the Council and will invite expressions of interest”. Therefore, a Notice of vacancy in the Office of Town Councillor was published on 14th August 2024.

Any person interested in being co-opted as a Braunstone Town Councillor had been requested to apply in writing to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk by 12noon on Monday 9th September 2024. No expressions of interest had been received by the deadline.

On 9th September, the deadline was extended by a further week until 12noon on Monday 16th September 2024. Again, no expressions of interest were received by the extended deadline.

As a result, on 16th September, the deadline was extended by another week until 12noon on Monday 23rd September 2024. Again, no expressions of interest were received by the deadline.

Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Tracey Shepherd and was

RESOLVED that expressions of interest in the Councillor vacancy for Millfield Ward be reopened, for consideration at the next Council meeting on 21st November 2024.

Reason for Decision

To provide further opportunity for interested residents to express an interest in being co-opted to the Councillor vacancy for Millfield Ward.

6257 Committee Appointments

Council considered Committee Appointments following changes in the membership of the Council (item 6 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Tracey Shepherd and was

RESOLVED that Councillor Garry Dulon be appointed as a member of the Planning & Environment Committee and the Citizen's Advisory Panel.

Reason for Decision

To enable the efficient and effective transaction of the Council's business by filling the vacancy on the Planning & Environment Committee and on the Citizens' Advisory Panel.

6258 Climate Change and Environmental Strategy

The Council considered, following consultation, a revised and updated Climate Change and Environmental Strategy to ensure that it was relevant, fit for purpose and that the Council had a framework for delivering its commitments (item 7 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Tracey Shepherd and was

RESOLVED that the proposed revisions to the Climate Change and Environmental Strategy (highlighted red at Appendix 1 of the report) be approved and adopted.

Reason for Decision

The Climate Change & Environmental Strategy provided the framework for the Town Council's response to Climate Change; therefore, it was important to ensure that it was fit for purpose, met the needs and aspirations of residents', and would be deliverable.

6259 Mosssdale Meadows Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements – Borrowing Application

The Council considered whether to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a Public Works Loan of £128,226 for the cost of the Mosssdale Meadows flood alleviation and drainage improvements (item 8 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Tracey Shepherd and was

RESOLVED

1. that the following resolutions be approved:
 - a) "to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £128,226 over the borrowing term of 40 years for the cost of the Mosssdale Meadows flood alleviation and drainage improvements; the annual loan repayments will come to around £7,773.34"; and
 - b) "it is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments"; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, to

put together and submit the borrowing application with supporting evidence.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To finance the high priority Mossdale Meadows Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements, as set out in the Capital Plan. The essential works consist of:*
 - i. *installation of a new brook culvert and bridge, which was at risk of collapse/subsidence, enabling increased water flows, reducing the likelihood of flooding, and*
 - ii. *drainage improvements at the entrance to the car park, to tackle surface water flooding, which occurs after significant intense rainfall, obstructing access to the car park, park, play area, and adjacent footpath / cycleway;*

loan repayments would be covered by the amounts set aside in the current revenue budget to repay loans which mature in the last (2023/2024) and next (2025/2026) financial years.
2. *To enable the detailed supporting evidence to be gathered and submitted with the Council's application without undue delay.*

6260 Request for Approved Absence – Councillor Satindra Sangha

The Council received and considered an absence request from Councillor Satindra Sangha in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 (item 9 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Tracey Shepherd and was

RESOLVED that Councillor Satindra Sangha's request for her absence to be approved, in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, be accepted and agreed.

Reason for Decision

Councillor Satindra Sangha had requested on 15th September 2024 that the Council approve an extension to her absence since she was currently not fit enough to return.

6261 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor, Councillor Paul Kennedy, made the following announcements:

“Since we last met there had only really been 2 events I have attended as Mayor”.

“In the Summer we had the fete on Mossdale Meadows, which seemed to be well attended, maybe due to the weather which was definitely better than last year! I have to thank all the councillors who attended and helped,

including Marion, my Deputy. Without her support that day my stall couldn't be run. I hope everyone had a good day, including the public who attended and the stall holders”.

“In addition, I hosted a short ceremony at the Civic Memorial Garden on 25th August for Ukrainian Independence Day. Despite the wet weather, it is important that we continue to show our support and solidarity with all Ukrainian people”.

“The next events I have are:

- 5th October – Apple Day on Franklin Park between 11am and 2pm
- 18th October – Diwali 7.30 at the Civic Centre
- 27th October – Halloween Disco at Thorpe Astley Community Centre
- 10th November – Remembrance Sunday at Saint Crispins Church at 10.45am
- 11th November – Armistice Day commemoration at the Civic Memorial Garden, starting at 10.45am
- 16th November – Christmas Craft Fair between 11am and 3pm”

b) Leader of the Council

Councillor Nick Brown commented on the following matters:

Summer Fete 2024

Councillor Brown commented on the very successful Summer Fete on Mossdale Meadows, 10th August 2024 and thanked officers for their work and support in organising the event.

Apple Day would be held on Franklin Park on Saturday 5th October and hoped that the weather would be good for the event to take place. It was hoped that this event would be a positive community event at the park in light of the tragic events in the vicinity that had taken place in September.

c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk

The Chief Executive and Town Clerk provided an update concerning the incident on Franklin Park and a summary of action taken to support the community. Report filed with the agenda as Item 10c.

6262 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

Councillor Amanda Hack, as County Councillor for Braunstone Division, reported on the following matters:

- a) Councillor Hack expressed her condolences to the family and friends of Mr Bhim Kohli following the gentleman's tragic death in September.
- b) Flooding in the Town, and particularly Amy Street. Work was currently being undertaken with partners to support the residents with incidents of flooding in the area. Councillor Amanda Hack requested that

Braunstone Town Council ask Leicester City Council to take action quickly to alleviate flooding at Amy Street and to support the local residents. It was also suggested that residents receive the resources to act as Flood Wardens.

- c) SEND support was under pressure at the moment but local Members of Parliament would put pressure on central government to support local authorities.
- d) Local public transport services and routes to encourage more residents to use public transport. It was noted that public transport was more crowded with school children using this method of transport to get to and from school as school bus services were now very expensive for families to afford.

b) Blaby District Council

Councillor Nick Brown, as District Councillor for Millfield Ward, reported on the following matters:

- a) Planning applications for conversion of residential properties into Children's Homes. Had been a noticeable increase in numbers of applications received but majority of properties did not cause any issues.
- b) Planning Policy – Blaby District Council's Land Use 15 year Policy now coming to an end.
- c) Funding for Food waste policies and provision of transport had been reduced but diesel vehicles still being used. Any net gain of the policy lost through use of diesel vehicles for delivery of food.
- d) Hopes that new central government would consider multi-year settlements to local authorities in order to allow councils to plan better for future projects.

6263 Questions from Councillors

To answer questions from Councillors where notice has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.11.

No questions had been submitted.

6264 Reports of Standing Committees: Community Development Committee – 11th July 2024

Council received the Report of the Community Development Committee held on 11th July 2024 (p8007 – 8013).

It was moved by Councillor Rebecca Lunn and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6265 Reports of Standing Committees: Extraordinary Planning & Environment Committee – 18th July 2024

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Extraordinary Planning & Environment Committee held on 18th July 2024 (p8014 – p8019).

It was moved by Councillor Sam Maxwell and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6266 Reports of Standing Committees: Employing Committee – 15th August 2024

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Employing Committee held on 15th August 2024 (p8020 – p8022).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6267 Reports of Standing Committees: Planning & Environment Committee – 29th August 2024

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee on 29th August 2024 (p8023– p8035).

It was moved by Councillor Sam Maxwell and

RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

6268 Reports of Standing Committees: Policy & Resources Committee – 12th September 2024

Council received the Report of the meeting of Policy & Resources Committee on 12th September 2024 (p8036 – p8045).

Page 8045, Minute 41 – Land adjacent to the New M1 Bridge, Thorpe Astley

Councillor Nick Brown advised that the new land at Thorpe Astley was now open to the public to use but had not yet been transferred into Braunstone Town Council as the legal process had not yet been completed. Councillor Brown thanked the developers for the work undertaken on the land and commented on the valuable asset this would be for the Town.

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

6269 Reports of Standing Committees: Extraordinary Meeting of Planning & Environment Committee – 19th September 2024

Council received the Report of the Extraordinary meeting of Planning & Environment Committee on 19th September 2024 (p8046 – 8047).

It was moved by Councillor Sam Maxwell and

RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

6270 Motions on Notice

No Motions on Notice had been submitted.

6271 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting scheduled 21st November 2024.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

21st NOVEMBER 2024

Item 5 – Co-Option to Vacancy on the Council

Purpose

To note that no expressions of interest were received to be co-opted as a member to fill the vacancy on the Council for the Millfield Ward.

Town Councillor Vacancy

A Notice of vacancy in the Office of Town Councillor was published on 26th June 2024 for the Millfield Ward, following the resignation of Sevim Aslan. A request for an election was not received within the required 14 days.

Public elections will not be held until May 2027; therefore, for the interim period the vacancy can be filled by co-option, voted for by the incumbent members of Braunstone Town Council.

Standing Order 4.9a sets out that “the Council will publicise that it intends to co-opt to the vacancy at the next meeting of the Council and will invite expressions of interest”. Therefore, a Notice of vacancy in the Office of Town Councillor was published on 14th August 2024.

Qualification for holding the Office of Town Councillor

To qualify for co-option, the candidate must:

- be either a British, Commonwealth or European Union citizen;
- on the ‘relevant date’ (i.e. on the day of co-option) be 18 years of age or over; and
- not be debarred from standing as a Councillor.

additionally, the candidate must meet one of the following four qualifications:

1. a local government elector in Braunstone Parish; or

have during the whole of the 12 months preceding the day of co-option:

2. occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in Braunstone Parish; or
3. had his/her principal or only place of work in Braunstone Parish; or
4. resided in Braunstone Parish or within three miles of the boundary.

Expressions of Interest

Any person interested in being co-opted as a Braunstone Town Councillor had to apply in writing to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk by 12noon on Monday 9th September 2024. No expressions of interest had been received by the deadline.

Therefore, on 9th September, the deadline was extended by a further week until 12noon on Monday 16th September 2024. Again, no expressions of interest were received by the extended deadline.

As a result, on 16th September, the deadline was extended by another week until 12noon on Monday 23rd September 2024.

Therefore, to provide further opportunity for interested residents to express an interest in being co-opted to the Councillor vacancy for Millfield Ward, Council on 26th September 2024 resolved “that expressions of interest in the Councillor vacancy for Millfield Ward be reopened, for consideration at the next Council meeting on 21st November 2024” (Minute 6256).

As a result, a further notice was published on 1st October 2024 inviting expressions of interest in being co-opted as a Braunstone Town Councillor for the Millfield Ward and to apply by 12noon on Monday 11th November 2024. No expressions of interest were received.

Further Vacancy

A further Notice of vacancy in the Office of Town Councillor was published on 5th November 2024 for the Millfield Ward, following the resignation of Garry Dulon. Electors have until 25th November 2024 to request an election to fill the vacancy, otherwise the Council can also fill the vacancy by co-option.

Proposals

The Council will know week commencing 25th November whether the second vacancy will be filled by election or co-option.

In the event that no election is called for the second vacancy, then it is recommended that for both vacancies, expressions of interest should be invited in being co-opted through December into the first half of January. Any expressions of interest received will be considered by Council on 30th January 2025.

If an election is called for the second vacancy, then it is recommended that the process for co-option to the first vacancy is postponed until after the election has been held. The reasoning is that running an election and co-option at the same time for the same Ward is potentially confusing for residents. The Council can reasonably argue that it has provided four opportunities to co-opt to the first vacancy and had not received any expressions of interest.

Recommendations

1. That it be noted that no expressions of interest had been received to be co-opted as a member to fill the vacancy on the Council for the Millfield Ward;
2. that it be noted that there was a second vacancy for the Millfield Ward and that electors had until 25th November 2024 to request an election; and
3. that either:
 - a) in the event that no election was called for the second Millfield Ward vacancy, then for both vacancies expressions of interest be invited for co-option as a Town Councillor, and be considered by Council on 30th January 2025; or
 - b) in the event that an election was called for the second Millfield Ward vacancy, then the process for co-option to the first vacancy be postponed until after the election had been held.

Reasons

1. Four separate notices had been published on 14th August, 9th & 16th September, and 1st October 2024 with no expressions of interest received.
2. A Notice of Vacancy had been published on 5th November 2024 in accordance with Section 87(1) of the Local Government Act 1972; electors had until 25th November 2024 to request an election to fill the second vacancy.
3. To ensure that the process for filling the Town Councillor vacancies for Millfield Ward was both clear and transparent.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

21st NOVEMBER 2024

Item 6 – Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

Purpose

To set out the context for the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies.

Background

Braunstone Town Council first considered and published its Medium to Long Term Priorities and Financial Planning assessment in 2014, since then it has been revised at least on an annual basis in order that changed circumstances and revised predictions can be incorporated.

The annual review takes place in November each year, including an update to the five year forecast, which is also reported/adjusted and reported with the budget and Council Tax precept proposals in January each year.

In January 2024, Policy & Resources Committee and Council received a report on the Council's Financial Position in regard to its cashflow and reserves. Due to the need to urgently address the predicted deficit, Council set a precept for 2024/2025 which was an increase of 26.59% compared to 2023/2024.

To ensure that the Council's medium term financial figures were kept up to date and were robust, both Policy & Resources Committee and Council reviewed and reassessed the 5 year projections, along with the Reserves Policy, in March 2024.

By identifying medium term priorities and financial planning, the Council aims to safeguard the delivery of important local services whilst ensuring appropriate future investment in the Town's services and infrastructure.

Global Economic Context

In October 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its World Economic Outlook Update, which forecasts global growth to stay at 3.2% over the next two years. The IMF forecast that global inflation will decline from 5.8% in 2024 to 4.3% in 2025.

In short, while the global economy is forecast to grow, the rate at which it grows is forecast to steadily decline. The IMF Report states "*Although monetary policy is expected to return to a neutral stance by 2025 in the world's largest economies, growth in most economies is expected to remain feeble over the medium term*". Compared to the IMF report in 2022 and 2023, both the growth forecasts are slightly lower and the inflation forecasts are slightly higher.

UK Economic Context

The IMF predicts UK growth at 1.1% during 2024, rising slightly to 1.5% in 2025.

In September 2024, the OECD projected UK CPI inflation to average at 2.7% during 2024 and 2.4% in 2025; remaining slightly above the Bank of England's 2% target.

The Governor has stated that assuming inflation stays low in the coming months then it is likely there will be a further cut in interest rates.

On 30th October, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published the October 2024 Economic and fiscal outlook; alongside the Chancellor's Autumn Budget. The OBR report states "Having stagnated last year, the economy is expected to grow by just over 1 per cent this year, rising to 2 per cent in 2025, before falling to around 1½ per cent, slightly below its estimated potential growth rate of 1⅔ per cent, over the remainder of the forecast. Budget policies temporarily boost output in the near term, but leave GDP largely unchanged in five years. If the increased level of public investment were sustained, it would permanently raise supply in the long term and by significantly more than it does in the forecast period. Budget policies push up CPI inflation by around ½ a percentage point at their peak, meaning it is projected to rise to 2.6 per cent in 2025, and then gradually fall back to target".

On 7th November 2024, the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee cut interest rates from 5% to 4.75%. Rates had also been cut in August by 0.25%. While inflation fell below the Bank's 2% target in the year to September 2024, the Bank expects it to rise again with the tax rises announced in the Budget and a rise in gas and electricity prices last month. As such it was cautious about further interest rate cuts in the short term. The Bank now predicts inflation to hit the 2% target in 2027.

In short, UK economic growth is predicted to be limited and while both inflation and interest rates are set to steadily fall, Councils are likely to continue to face higher costs and funding pressures for the foreseeable future.

Rolling Five Year Budget Plan

Attached as Appendix 1 are the updated financial projections for the period until 2029/2030, which is based on the following assumptions:

- staff salary costs: to accommodate increases in the national living wage, and based on the average increase over the previous three years, costs increasing by 6% in the next couple of years, 5% in 2028/2029 and returning to inflation levels by 2029/2030; the forecast costs for 2025/2026 also includes an estimate for anticipated increases in Employer National Insurance contributions;
- pension scheme costs, taking into account the 2022 valuation with a 6% pay increase each year;
- ensuring the Council pays the foundation living wage, predicted to increase by 20% over the next 5 years;
- 3% inflation on operational costs during 2025/26 (CPI predicted to be between 2% and 3% during that period);

- savings from existing loans which mature during the period being reinvested in additional borrowing to finance projects included in the Capital Plan;
- funds being placed in the Revenue Contingency Fund from 2025/2026; and
- that the base budget predicted when setting the Council Tax equates to the actual income and expenditure.

The projections are based on the following being included in the base budget to replenish the Council's Reserves:

- £79,000 in 2024/2025 (included);
- a further £71,000 (totalling £150,000) in 2025/2026; and
- a reduction of £50,000 in 2026/2027 (totalling £100,000);

resulting in the Revenue (General Fund / Non-Earmarked) Reserve reaching the equivalent of three months net expenditure, as recommended by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance, during 2026.

These projections, using current tax base information, result in a 14.98% increase on the precept for 2025/26; a total for the year of:

- £23.33 on a typical band B property;
- £26.68 on a band C property; and
- £30.01 on a band D property.

Town Council Business Plan

The Council's Mission Statement sets out the Council's vision to provide high quality services and support the needs of the community, while recognising that this is only sustained by ensuring that the resources to do it are available.

In addition to the Mission Statement, the Council has focused its resources on four main areas of activity (Strategic Aims) for the medium term to ensure effective delivery of initiatives and projects, given the limits on resources. The four Strategic Aims are supported by Delivery Objectives, which are reviewed annually. In addition, the Council has key objectives relating to its Committees and Service Areas, which are also reviewed annually.

The Council's Mission Statement, Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives, and the Service Objectives for 2024/2025 are set out in the Business Plan, attached at Appendix 2.

Capital Programme

The Council is responsible for a significant amount of physical assets and to assist with longer term financial planning, the Council approves, in consultation with the Citizens' Advisory Panel, a list of Capital Projects, which includes identified long term improvements to the Council's Assets. The Capital Plan approved with the 2024/2025 budget in January 2024, is attached as Appendix 3. The Plan identifies projects, which the Town Council will need to deliver to both ensure the long term sustainability and efficiency of its services as well as responding to Climate Change.

The Capital Plan is a rolling document, which is reviewed annually alongside the

budget and identifies priority projects. Significant investment projects completed over in the last 3 years include:

- Shakespeare Park: site, new pavilion, tennis courts and play area;
- Braunstone Civic Centre: toilets, including installation of a Changing Places toilet, and kitchen facilities; and
- Climate Reduction initiatives: installation of solar PV panels, an air source heat pump and electric vehicle charging points.

Investment in the Council's infrastructure, measures to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint and in improvements to biodiversity and Council services will continue to present pressures over the forthcoming years and the Council needs to make financial provision for replenishing its reserves and financing public works loans in order to deliver its Capital Programme.

Financial Strategy

Given the Council's Financial Position in 2023/2024 and the level of risk this posed to the ability of the Town Council to function and deliver its services, the following financial strategy is proposed to ensure the Council's finances are resilient:

- balancing of annual operational income with annual operational expenditure;
- continued monitoring of the level of reserves and assessment of future investment needs;
- regular monitoring of reserves and general fund expenditure with proposed actions to address any issues prior to it becoming structural;
- forecast future year's expenditure on previous actual income and expenditure; and
- yearly assessment of the financial constraints.

Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks.

In April 2024, Braunstone Town Council sought a short-term loan to enable it to have the cash to function and meet its commitments. The Council took action to address the deficit through its 2024/2025 budget and council tax precept. However, the Council will gradually replenish its reserves, which won't reach recommended minimum levels until 2026. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, loss of income or significant increased expenditure, there is a risk the Council will need to borrow funds in April 2025.

Where the Council undertakes any short-term borrowing to meet expenses pending future income; it will do so by either approaching one of its principal authorities or a UK Bank.

The proposed replenishment of reserves by 2026, will if approved, mean that going forward the Council will only borrow for projects identified in the Capital Plan. When borrowing for Capital Projects, the Council uses the UK Debt Management Office Public Works Loan Scheme, which provides funds for capital projects with fixed

interest and capital repayments for the term of the loan. The Council provides for financing the capital and interest repayments on such loans through this annual Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning process.

Braunstone Town Council deposits its funds in UK Bank Accounts only. While the sums held in some bank accounts significantly exceeds the limit of protection (£85,000) afforded by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme; the risk of losing large sums of money is considered low since during the financial crises of 2008 the UK Government took steps to prevent UK Banks at risk from collapsing.

The Town Council will consider this risk level when reviewing Corporate Risks as part of the Annual Governance Review and will identify any mitigating actions necessary.

Reserves Strategy

Loss of funding, transfer of services, the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent economic pressures resulted in the Council using £117,000 from its reserves between 2018 and 2023 to offset significant increases in the Council Tax precept in one year; while each subsequent year it delayed replenishing the reserves.

As a result, the Internal Audit report of 2024, contained the following:

The level of general reserves at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year was insufficient and did not meet the guidelines laid out in the JPAG Practitioners' Guide 2024 paragraphs 5.31 to 5.39.

In terms of recommendations, the Internal Auditor recognised that the Council was implementing a plan to address the level of general reserves “reserves are critically low, however, Council is currently addressing the issue as outlined in the Medium-Term Strategy and Financial Planning to replenish reserves by 2026. The precept has also been increased for the 2024/2025 financial year, alongside revenue savings”.

The External Audit of 2024 also highlighted the position with the Council's Reserves:

Upon review, general reserves are being held at a very low level. We are aware that the council is aware and that the clerk is monitoring the position. Per Paragraph 5.33 of JPAG Practitioners' Guide, best practice suggests this level should be at least 3 months expenditure as a minimum. These cannot include ring fenced funds and should avoid including funds which are designated for another purpose. The council's policy anticipates that by 2026, the general fund will be of at least 3 months expenditure.

Given the expenditure pressures this year and the critical position with the Council's reserves, the Reserves Policy was revisited in March 2024 and contains arrangements for Monitoring, Managing and Maintaining the Council's Reserves (along with the Principles, previously adopted as part of this Strategy).

A copy of the Reserves Policy is attached at Appendix 4. Since its adoption, the Policy is considered to be working and fit for purpose. However, the Council has the opportunity to review this annually in November as part of this Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning Report.

The projections at Appendix 1 set out a plan to replenish reserves by 2026 and therefore, in accordance with the Reserves Policy, do not include any proposals to utilise revenue reserves to balance revenue budgets or offset precept rises in the short to medium term.

A list of Earmarked Reserves are set out at Appendix 5.

Income Pressures

1. Reduction in the Council Tax Base

As the cost of meeting Council Tax Benefit payments is a charged against billing authorities Collection Fund, any significant increase in the number of benefit claimants as a result of a recession and the rising cost of living will result in a reduction in the Council Tax Base figures; which means the Council Tax charge would have to increase to set the same budget as the previous year.

Coupled with the impact on the Council's finances resulting from the loss of the Council Tax Support Grant, a significant reduction in the Council Tax Base will have a severe impact upon the Council's ability to deliver Capital Projects, protect its services and recover its reserves, without a significant percentage increase on the precept.

2. Income from Facility Hires

The income budgets for Civic Centre Room Hire and Sports Pitch fees were approved by Council on 25th January 2024 to increase by 2.5% to take account of potential lost bookings. Thorpe Astley Community Centre hire income is based on the predicted slightly lower outturn plus 2.5%.

Table 1 below shows the pro-rata budget for community centres hire income (i.e. the fees subject to the price increase) from 1st April to 30th September 2024, the actual income received during the period (note this doesn't necessarily mean the booking was within the period), the total income received during the same period in 2023 and the percentage difference in income received this year compared to last year.

TABLE 1: Income April – September	Budgeted	Actual	Last Year	Difference
Braunstone Civic Centre	£37,750	£46,698	£36,287	28.69%
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	£5,712	£6,270	£4,504	39.21%

The table does not include income from contracts, such as the nursery/pre-school, doctors' surgery or Civic Community Lounge.

Given the economic pressures many are facing, so far the price increase does not appear to have had a negative impact on the net income from room hire and more widely on the offer and appeal the centres have in the community.

In the case of the Civic Centre, the facility is now more attractive with the delivery of the Capital Project to improve the toilet facilities and the kitchen facilities of the Civic Community Lounge to enable it to operate a Café service.

The projections at Appendix 1 assume that the income from facilities hires will remain steady; the figures do include the cost of a full staff establishment. There are currently some Duty Officer vacancies and this post has a regular turnover of personnel; therefore, in the short term there is potential to manage vacancies, staff recruitment and contracted hours to balance budgets in the event of a downturn in facilities income. Equally if hires/bookings and the associated income starts to climb, resources will be available to pay staff additional hours to avoid large accumulations of hours.

3. Pressure on Facility Operators

In addition to income from facility bookings; the Council receives income from partners and private operators who provide services from our facilities. This includes the Operator of the Civic Community Lounge, the provider of the Nursery/Pre-School at Thorpe Astley Community Centre, and Kingsway Surgery who provide the branch service at Thorpe Astley.

Both the operator of the Civic Community Lounge and the provider of the Nursery/Pre-School have faced a difficult business environment following the Covid-19 pandemic. Both have worked with the Council, which has approved fixed term reductions in their respective contract payments at various times in order that their operations continue to be viable. In both cases, the operators are likely to face pressures resulting from the increase in the National Living Wage and proposed increases in Employers National Insurance contributions.

Therefore, the predictions at Appendix 1 do not assume any additional income to the Council from these contracts. Continued pressure on household incomes could exacerbate pressures on these operators and the Council will similarly need to weigh up the economic value against the social value of these contracts if trading becomes difficult.

Expenditure Pressures

1. Inflation and Utility Costs

Inflation has reduced to 1.7% in the year to September 2024 (down from 2.2% in August); compared to 6.7% in the year to September 2023. The effect of increases in utility and fuel costs and in the cost of goods generally continues,

which remain high compared to 2021 levels, continues put pressure on the Council's finances.

The Council have agreed new two year electricity and gas supply deals from December 2024, which are estimated to save £28,495 per annum. However, due to utility budgets being insufficient to meet current costs and there being variables in respect of predicted energy generated by solar PV, exported and being reused via a potential battery storage system, at this stage it is recommended the Council remain cautious and simply freeze the utility budgets. Nevertheless, it will be a matter for Policy & Resources Committee and Council in January 2025 to determine based on the information available at the time.

With uncertainty remaining on the international markets, mainly due to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, it continues to be a priority to invest in carbon reduction initiatives in accordance with the Climate Change & Environmental Strategy and Action Plan. While such initiatives will reduce pressure on operational budgets, there are significant upfront costs to deliver the investment along with project management and delivery costs.

2. Cost of Borrowing

Public Works Board lending is offered at a fixed margin above the Government's cost of borrowing, as measured by gilt yields. The cost of this borrowing was between 1.7% and 1.9% (depending on the term of the loan) in January 2021; by October 2022, the interest repayments had increased to between 5.9% and 6.2%. In October 2023 rates stabilised between 5.5% and 5.8%. Current interest rates (October 2024) are between 5.01% and 5.68%.

One of the Councils loans matured in 2023; therefore, the annual repayment cost has been saved this financial year. Two further loans mature in May 2025, saving half the annual repayment next financial year (2025/2026). In addition, another two loans mature over the period of this plan and have been included in the projections at Appendix 1.

As things stand, Public Works Loans are the most attractive way to deliver many of the objectives set out in the Council's Capital Plan and including the actions resulting from the Carbon Audit under the Climate Change and Environmental Strategy.

3. Staff Salaries

Staff Salary and oncosts (including pensions) account for 60% of the Council's expenditure.

The NJC Employers' Pay offer for 2024/2025 was agreed on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 and is backdated to April 2024. Each scale point will be increased by £1,290 per annum (pro-rata for part-time staff). Overall, it amounts to £25,040 for the financial year, a 4.2% increase.

The 2024/2025 salaries and on costs budgets totalled £633,836. While the Council budgeted for a 5% pay increase, the base budget for staff salaries is short by £5,739 (includes on-costs). There are small differences on 19 posts in the figure listed in the base compared to the actual. The likelihood is that when the figures were worked out either the annual increment wasn't applied or last year's salary increase wasn't applied.

Taking into account fixed term changes to hours for the year, and the base budget shortfall above, then the extra cost will be £596 (therefore, the budget currently appears sufficient for this financial year).

This offer achieves a £12.85 hourly rate (from £12.18) on the Council's lowest scale point 5, a 5.5% increase.

The Chancellor in the Autumn budget on 30th October 2024 announced an increase in Employer's National Insurance contributions by 1.2% to 15% in April 2025, along with a lowering of the threshold at which payments are made from £9,100 per annum to £5,000. While the Employment Allowance has been increased, this doesn't apply to public bodies. An initial estimate of the additional costs to the Council is approximately £2,500 in 2025/2026, which has been built into the projection at Appendix 1.

The Chancellor also confirmed £12.21 per hour as the National Living Wage from April 2025.

Based on the form of pay settlement (i.e. fixed amount for each scale point), average overall pay increases over the last three years (approximately 6%), the need to meet additional Employer National Insurance Contributions, and ensure that the Town Council continues to meet the Living Wage Foundation rates; a 6% pay increase is estimated for 2025/2026 to 2027/2028, then 4% pay increase in the two subsequent years (2026/2027 & 2027/2028), 5% in 2028/2029 and then 3% in 2029/2030. This has been built into the income/expenditure projections at Appendix 1.

4. Pension Costs

All eligible staff have been auto-enrolled in the pension scheme and no eligible staff have opted out.

The actuarial valuation of the Leicestershire County Council Pension Fund is undertaken every three years, with that last valuation based on the position of each employing body at 31st March 2022. Therefore, the next review is due next year.

Braunstone Town Council's employers' contribution rates for the three year period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026 will be 21.4%. This is reduced from 22.1% in the previous period 2019/20 to 2022/23. However, remains up on the 19.79% contribution rate prior to 2019/20.

However, the current return on investment, coupled with the increase in salaries averaging around 6% over three years, with the potential for of slightly above inflation increases in the coming years, will put ongoing pressure on the Council's overall pension costs, which have been included in the revised and subsequent year projections at Appendix 1.

5. Rises in the Foundation Living Wage

In February 2015, the Town Council decided to pay the Living Wage, according to the criteria used by the Living Wage Foundation – which is based on the cost of living linked to a basket of household goods and services.

On 22nd September 2022, the Living Wage Foundation announced that the rate increased by 10.1% in the UK, more than ever in the Living Wage Foundation's 11-year history reflecting sharp increases in living costs.

The current Foundation Living Wage rate for 2024/2025 is £12.60 per hour. However, increases in the National Living Wage are likely to result in equivalent increases to the Foundation Living Wage rate, which over the period of this plan may exceed the lowest NJC pay scale on Braunstone Town Council's establishment. For example, scale point 5, was paid at £12.18 per hour prior to the salary settlement. This could result in the Town Council reviewing salary scales for some posts in the coming years.

6. Other Public Service Providers

Increasing costs and a squeeze on public spending has put significant pressures on the revenue budgets of Principal Authorities, the NHS and the Police. While the Town Council doesn't receive funding directly from Central Government, cuts to public services in the community provided by other bodies will continue to put pressure on the Town Council to either take on services directly or provide an alternative. Picking up principal authority services which have been either devolved or taken over by the Town Council will put further strain on the Council's revenue budgets and reserves and either lead to further rises in the parish precept and/or significantly restrict the delivery of the Council's Capital Plan.

Leicestershire County Council in particular is struggling and has been identified as a Council which may have to declare a Section 114 notice in the next couple of years. The current agreement with Leicestershire County Council to operate Braunstone Town Library, which includes a grant to cover Library building costs, ends in September 2029. Therefore, the arrangement for the Town Council to operate Braunstone Town Library will need to be reviewed and renegotiated in 2028.

Current Financial Year (2024/2025)

The actual position with the revenue budget for the current financial year (2024/2025) for 1st April 2024 until 30th September 2024 is set out in Table 2 below:

	Budget (Half Year)	Actual (Half Year)	Difference
Income	£573,350	£586,680	£13,330
Expenditure	£525,100	£530,408	£5,308
Difference	£48,250	£56,272	

Committee Consideration

Policy & Resources Committee on 7th November 2024 received an assessment setting out the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (Policy & Resources Committee minute 50).

The Committee resolved to recommend to Council that it approves the recommendations, for the reasons, set out below.

Recommendations

1. That the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, be approved;
2. that the Council's Strategic Aims, Delivery Objectives and Committee/Service Objectives, attached at Appendix 2, be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought;
3. that once the revenue reserve reaches the equivalent of three months' net expenditure; the additional funds be earmarked to invest in infrastructure and assets, as identified in the Capital Plan at Appendix 3, and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations;
4. that the Financial, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted;
5. that the Reserves Policy, attached at Appendix 4, be approved; and
6. that the Earmarked Reserves be confirmed, as set out at Appendix 5.

Reasons

1. To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2025/2026 and beyond.
2. To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties.
3. To maintain the standard of the council's facilities and open spaces and to ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.

4. To effectively manage the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, taking into account the associated risks.
5. To ensure the financial resilience of the Council, that it would be able to function, invest in its assets and deliver services to residents; while avoiding significant increases in council tax precept in future years.
6. To ensure that reserves earmarked relate only to a commitment or a restricted use; maximising the level of funds to replenish the revenue (general fund) reserve.

APPENDIX 1 – 5 YEAR INCOME / EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

	Original 2024/25	Revised 2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Operational Requirement	£403,863	£327,797	£327,475	£334,095	£338,944	£355,891	£370,126
Plus Increase in costs	£12,116	£12,116	£9,824	£8,352	£16,947	£14,236	£11,104
Less Savings / Income Generation	£25,883	£12,438	£3,204	£3,504	£0	£0	£0
Total including Savings	£390,096	£327,475	£334,095	£338,944	£355,891	£370,126	£381,230
Pension Provision	£126,767	£123,467	£136,373	£144,555	£153,229	£160,890	£165,717
Staff Salaries	£507,069	£493,869	£549,566	£582,540	£617,492	£648,367	£667,818
TOTAL Staff Costs	£633,836	£617,336	£685,939	£727,095	£770,721	£809,257	£833,535
Existing Borrowing Repayments	£69,539	£69,539	£64,953	£58,367	£48,889	£45,997	£39,963
<i>Less Payments for Matured Loans</i>	<i>-£4,586</i>	<i>-£4,586</i>	<i>-£6,586</i>	<i>-£9,478</i>	<i>-£2,892</i>	<i>-£6,034</i>	£0
Civic Centre Improvements Borrowing	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511
Climate Initiatives Borrowing	£18,804	£18,804	£19,106	£19,106	£19,106	£19,106	£19,106
Potential Borrowing: Mossdale	£0	£0	£7,774	£7,774	£7,774	£7,774	£7,774
Potential Borrowing: Capital Projects	£0	£0	£0	£9,478	£22,370	£28,404	£28,404
TOTAL Borrowing Costs	£94,268	£94,268	£95,758	£95,758	£105,758	£105,758	£105,758
Contingency	£0	£30,990	£8,000	£30,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000
Capital Projects	£17,500	£9,575	£15,000	£40,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,135,700	£1,079,644	£1,138,792	£1,231,797	£1,322,370	£1,375,142	£1,410,523
INCOME from Hires/Fees/Contracts	£232,816	£164,816	£164,816	£164,816	£164,816	£164,816	£164,816
Non-Earmarked Reserves (To/From)	£54,000	£54,000	£150,000	£100,000	£20,000	£0	£0
Revenue Reserves Balance	£64,451	£64,451	£214,451	£314,451	£334,451	£334,451	£334,451
<i>Revenue Reserve % of Net Expenditure</i>	<i>6.56%</i>	<i>6.65%</i>	<i>19.00%</i>	<i>26.72%</i>	<i>27.81%</i>	<i>27.41%</i>	<i>26.74%</i>
Earmarked Reserves (To/From)	£25,000	£25,000	£5,000	£10,000	£25,000	£10,000	£5,000
Capital Reserves Expenditure	£21,616	£21,616	£6,000	£10,000	£12,000	£12,000	£16,000
Earmarked/Capital Reserves Balance	£8,653	£8,653	£7,653	£7,653	£20,653	£18,653	£7,653
Net Precept	£981,884	£968,828	£1,128,976	£1,176,981	£1,202,554	£1,220,326	£1,250,707
Band D (scaled Tax Base)	4,901.85	£200.31	£197.65	£230.32	£240.11	£245.33	£255.15
% Increase	26.59%	N/A	14.98%	4.25%	2.17%	1.48%	2.49%
Average % Increase	N/A	N/A	5.07%				



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

BUSINESS PLAN 2024/2025

Strategic Aims & Delivery Objectives

Town Council Mission

The Council's Mission Statement sets out its vision to provide high quality services and support the needs of the community, while recognising that this is only sustained by ensuring that the resources to do it are available.

Mission Statement - We exist:

1. *to ensure that local services and the environment reach the highest possible standards within the resources available for citizens, visitors and those who work in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley;*
2. *to provide a focus for civic pride;*
3. *to listen, identify and respond to agreed local needs; and*
4. *to help develop a strong, secure, self-reliant, self-confident community, free from discrimination.*

"Spectemur. Agendo" translates "Let us be Judged by Our Actions"

Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives (2024/2025)

The Council has four Strategic Aims for the medium term, which are set out below. Each Aim is supported by specific delivery objectives for the year, which are reviewed and developed as part of the annual review of the Council's Business Plan and Capital Plan and the annual setting of the budget and Council Tax precept.

1. Protect and Enhance our Parks and Open Spaces

Aim: To invest in and maintain high quality urban green spaces for sport, recreation and play, while enriching the natural environment.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Support existing Clubs at Shakespeare Park to grow while supporting new sporting activities, such as Tennis and Petanque;
- (b) deliver tennis initiatives to enhance participation;
- (c) continue to work with Blaby District Council and the developer to ensure improvements are made to the culvert at Thorpe Astley Park;
- (d) carry out Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements at Mossdale Meadows; and
- (e) refurbish and enhance Impey Close Play Area and surrounding open space.

2. Provide Vibrant Community Facilities

Aim: To provide vibrant, accessible and cost effective community facilities, which continue to be used by and respond to the needs of our community.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Deliver essential works on the Civic Centre building fabric; and
- (b) support the expansion of the Civic Centre Café Service, including at Thorpe Astley on event days.

3. Support and Connect the Local Community

Aim: To both nurture and enhance the Town's community life and connect our communities to reduce isolation and build community cohesion.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Support new and existing community activities and initiatives through our Community Grants Schemes and Programme of Events;
- (b) co-ordinate community events, such as Apple Day, 80th Anniversary of D-Day, Shakespeare Park Open Day, Thorpe Astley on the Beach;
- (c) develop outreach Children's reading and activities at Thorpe Astley Community Centre; and
- (d) support the Local Area Coordination Project.

4. Respond to Climate Change and champion sustainable development

Aim: To embed climate and environmental awareness in our decision making and actions and play our part in supporting the community to do the same.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Deliver actions identified in the Carbon Audit with a view to the Council becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030;
- (b) undertake surveys and produce Management Plans to enhance the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces;
- (c) support and facilitate initiatives to improve cycling and walking routes within the Town and to the City Centre, Fosse Park and Meridian;
- (d) work to ensure that development meets present needs, minimises air pollution and car journeys, while protecting the needs of future generations; and
- (e) recommission a carbon audit of our activities to ensure that all possible actions are being taken and that new and emerging technologies and approaches are utilised to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Objectives

In addition to the Mission Statement and Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives, the Council's Committees and Service Areas have operational objectives.

Planning and Environment Objectives

1. To ensure sustainable development, which meets the needs of the present generation without prejudicing the existing built environment and the needs of future generations.
2. To improve the environment, in pursuit of which, objectives 3 to 7 below are contributors.
3. To seek high standards of design and construction within planning applications and to ensure all developments are consistent with environmental objectives.
4. To inform and consult local residents about major planning proposals, Development Plans and other planning initiatives by central and local government.
5. To work with others to minimise the impact from:
 - (a) traffic; and
 - (b) air and light pollution.
6. To promote responsible dog ownership and waste disposal.
7. To provide and maintain street seats and notice boards at key locations.
8. To monitor the New Lubbethorpe development and to respond to any implications of that development for the environment of the Town.

Community Development Objectives

Nurturing and enhancing community life, equal opportunities and social inclusion.

Young people

1. To create opportunities for young people to have a voice
2. To identify young people's needs and give support to new local initiatives including summer holiday activities
3. To maintain positive relations with local school, pre-school and education providers

Crime reduction services

4. Working with the Police, reduce opportunities for crime, increase public safety and establish a community spirit.

Social inclusion, recreation & culture

5. To work with our partners to attract increased funding and the provision of a wider range of sporting and other services at local level
6. To provide support for the Office of Town Mayor and to promote Civic, Ceremonial and commemorative functions, including the flying of flags
7. To assist local clubs and societies to undertake their work for the benefit of the citizens of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley
8. To direct grants to organisations where this will be of greatest benefit to the citizens of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley
9. To organise arts events/ entertainment's/ Civic Occasions which bring people together

10. To encourage the formation of new community groups by promoting free/subsidised use of the Council's Community Facilities
11. To promote social inclusion

Corporate Management & Capital Project Objectives

1. To ensure effective management of the authority
2. To ensure effective implementation of the Council's policies and priorities
3. To ensure the Council's management arrangements, facilitate performance and efficient use of resources
4. To provide efficient and effective office services to support the Council's activities
5. To provide efficient and effective support to the democratically elected members to enable them to make policy decisions
6. To provide efficient and effective information to committees
7. To deal with telephone calls, and personal callers, promptly, courteously and efficiently
8. To ensure and arrange effective staff training
9. To develop a motivated workforce with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to implement the Council's policies and services
10. To maintain adequate personal records, health and safety controls, and fire evacuation polices
11. To manage and control land and property belonging to the Council
12. To maintain an effective filing and retrieval system
13. To undertake capital projects for the benefit of the citizens of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley
14. To ensure that major repairs and renewals are satisfactory and undertaken on Council owned buildings
15. To provide office accommodation for the Council's administrative staff
16. To ensure the Council engages with the Community concerning its activities, including with consultative bodies, such as the Citizens' Advisory Panel.

Community Centres Objectives

1. To provide and maintain high quality function rooms for use by hirers
2. To provide and maintain quality meeting rooms for Council and local community groups at low cost
3. To provide a Licensed Bar/Catering service for use by hirers and community groups at prices that are comparable with other similar establishments in the area
4. To maintain usage of the Centres for the benefit of the community

Open Spaces & Parks Objectives

1. To provide and maintain parks and open spaces to a high standard
2. To provide quality sports facilities to meet identified needs
3. To provide and maintain play equipment to a high and safe standard
4. To help fight pollution and climate change by planting trees on our parks



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

CAPITAL PLAN 2024/2025

The Council’s Capital Projects have been identified through emerging priorities, surveys and consultation, the Citizens’ Advisory Panel and the Council’s Committees. Each year Policy & Resources Committee, when considering the budget estimates and precept for the forthcoming financial year, reviews progress with Capital Projects and updates the list according to funding and priorities. The Capital Plan forms the foundation of the strategic investment and improvement works undertaken by the Town Council in the year ahead. The Capital Plan proposals are considered and approved at Full Council in January when the budget and precept is set.

Capital Projects for 2024/2025 – 2025/2026

Parks and Open Spaces Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mosssdale Meadows & Merrileys	Replace culvert bridge at Mosssdale Meadows. <i>Existing culvert is not suitable for flow of water which causes flooding on the park on a regular basis</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £150k Borrowing
	Improve drainage on Lubbesthorpe Bridleway at Mosssdale Meadows <i>Length of concrete bridleway, which slopes down from Shakespeare Drive to Mosssdale Meadows floods and produces a heavy amount of surface water run off during heavy and prolonged rain causing flooding around the depot and football pitches, as well as on the bridleway.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k Borrowing: Link to “Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mosssdale Meadows”.
	Drainage work to the entrance of Mosssdale Meadows car park to drain water from the car park into the brook. <i>The car park entrance was prone to frequent flooding which was raised during the Walking & Cycling route construction</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k Borrowing: Link to “Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mosssdale Meadows”.
	Resurfacing of Mosssdale Meadows car park with tarmac. <i>Currently the car park consists of hardcore and stone which frequently gets washed down towards the brook in heavy rain.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k Borrowing: Link to “Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mosssdale Meadows”.

Parks and Open Spaces Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mosssdale Meadows & Merrileys <i>Continued</i>	Replacement of Toddler swings (<i>estimated end of life – medium risk</i>)	Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	New Roof and Roof Insulation at Mosssdale Depot and Sports Changing Rooms and installation of solar panels, new electric heating (explore air source heat pump) and LED Lighting. <i>A Structural Survey has identified that the roof is deteriorating and isn't strong enough to hold solar panels (as recommended by the Carbon Audit). There is currently no central heating at the premises, with electric heaters for the staff room at the Depot. The building is not energy efficient and needs to be both in the short and long term to reduce carbon, energy use and costs.</i>	Estimated: £100k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>
	Refurbishment of Changing Rooms and Sports facilities at Mosssdale Pavilion. <i>The Changing Facilities and Social Facilities could make more effective use of the space and need improvement and modernisation.</i>	
Impey Close playground and Open Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resurface playground with rubber mulch under play equipment and pathway. 2. Install new and replace vandalised equipment. 3. Improve paths, including gravel path "yellow brick road" and planting in surrounding open space. <i>Rubber tiles damaged and in places missing. Surfaces damaged/vandalised and pathways eroded.</i>	Estimated: £100k <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>

Community Centres Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Installation of Battery Storage for Solar PV Panels. <i>Both Community Centres are used in the evenings. Civic Centre has electric cookers. Millfield Hall includes electric heating and air conditioning. Thorpe Astley Community Centre contains an electric Air Source Heat Pump.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £20k <i>Borrowing Underspend, Annual Capital Budget.</i>

Community Centres Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre Continued	Replacement of Civic Centre foyer skylight and corridor frame and windows. <i>Both the foyer skylight and the corridor and windows are over 25 years old and do not meet modern insulation standards.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Installation of additional Solar Panels on Civic Centre Roofs – Council Chamber, Fosse Room, Ravenhurst Room and rear toilets. <i>New roof potentially allows for the installation of additional solar panels reducing the impact on climate change and making savings.</i>	Linked to Civic Centre Roof Refurbishment.
	Civic Centre Roof Refurbishment: Council Chamber, Fosse Room, Ravenhurst Room and rear toilets. <i>The roof on the Council Chamber and Fosse Room is leaking and has received several patches. Advice is that the roof has passed its life expectancy and will need refurbishing in the short term.</i>	Fundamental to building integrity Estimated: £100k <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget & Reserves</i>
	Replacement of Civic Centre Windows. <i>The windows are over 20 years old and do not meet modern insulation standards. Some are unsafe to open.</i>	Health & Safety Risk. Consider through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £50k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Civic Centre radiator replacement and review of location. <i>Some areas of the building are well provided for with radiators and are hot, while other areas of the building have limited radiators and are cold.</i>	Consider through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £25k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Millfield Hall – Creation of small external storage area next to the Millfield Hall and kitchen for furniture. <i>Providing space for hirers. This can be accommodated by relocating the bin store since the mini-bus compound is no longer in use.</i>	Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Community Centres Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre <i>Continued</i>	Council Chamber internal refurbishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating/Air Conditioning • Mood Lighting <i>The facilities need modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars, training and social events.</i>	Consider once roof replaced and through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £25k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Refurbish/Replace Fire Doors in Fosse Room and Millfield Hall kitchen. <i>Doors and frames are rotten and doors stick when the frames swell in the damp. Potential to hinder exit in an emergency.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Millfield Hall and Council Chamber Floor stripping and revarnishing <i>Floors wearing and risk damage from use and liquid if not sealed and treated.</i>	Estimated: £10k <i>Maintenance Budget</i> See proposed replacement below (Medium to Long Term)
Both Centres	Installation of hearing loop systems in main rooms at both Community Centres. <i>Item already included where refurbishment of specific rooms has been identified.</i>	Rolling Programme from 2023/24. <i>Annual Budgets</i>

Short to Medium Term Projects (within the next 7 years)

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Thorpe Astley Park	Refurbishment of Thorpe Astley Park Tennis Courts <i>Tap4tennis installed and income being generated. Perimeter fencing regularly vandalised and playing surface improvements would enhance the facility for users.</i>	Estimated £30k. <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>
Franklin Park	Widen and make improvements to path. <i>Path connects residential areas of the Town with local amenities and is well used. The path would benefit from being a shared use path to facilitate movements on foot and by cycling. The path was identified in the Blaby District Open Spaces Audit as substandard and in need of improvement.</i>	Estimated £75k. <i>Explore external funding working with Walk & Ride Blaby.</i>

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mosssdale Meadows	Widen and make improvements to path through Mosssdale Meadows & Merrileys from Shakespeare Drive to Brockenhurst Drive, including installation of lighting and CCTV. <i>Path connects residential areas of the Town with new GCW Phase 2 Cycle Route between Braunstone Town and Meridian and Thorpe Astley. The path would benefit from being a shared use path to facilitate movements on foot and by cycling.</i>	<i>External funding working with Walk & Ride Blaby.</i>
	Gateway Fencing Mosssdale Meadows – Brockenhurst Drive entrance <i>Fencing in need of refurbishment.</i>	Estimated £10k - £20k. <i>Annual Capital Budgets</i>
	Electric Wiring and installation of electric vehicle charging point at Mosssdale Meadows Depot and Changing Rooms. Electricians have confirmed that wiring is out of date and complex. Items have been added and rewired and potential fire hazard. Work should include electric vehicle charging point ahead of any change of the vehicle fleet to electric.	Estimated £10k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>
All Play Areas	Rolling programme of identifying and replacing play equipment and installing mulch safety surfaces where these are near end of life. <i>Most of the Council's play equipment and safety surfaces are over 10 years old, a significant amount of equipment is over 20 years old. Overall many Play areas risk deterioration and maintenance costs increasing if equipment and safety surfaces are not replaced on a rolling basis.</i>	Prioritise to ROSPA reports, funding streams and increases in maintenance costs. <i>Annual Budgets</i> Franklin Park – remaining surfaces during 2024/2025 – 2025/2026
All Parks	Rolling programme of tree surveys and works <i>Currently maintenance budgets are stretched and tree maintenance and works are reactionary.</i>	Over a 5/6 year period undertake a rolling programme. <i>Annual Budgets</i>

Short to Medium Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Civic Centre Ravenhurst Room & corridor – new floor <i>Consider replacing carpet with laminate floor or similar for multiple uses and users and for cleaning.</i>	Schedule following Building Improvements Estimated £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Fosse Room – Audio / Visual Equipment, including sound and loop system and fixed projector. <i>The facilities need modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars and training.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Installation of Air Source Heat Pump <i>Part of Building refurbishment, insulation improvements and commitment to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.</i>	Estimated: £45k <i>Borrowing</i>
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	Thorpe Astley main hall Mood Lights. <i>To make the facilities attractive for function hire. Hirers of the Millfield Hall provide positive feedback on the mood lighting.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Replacement of Carpet tiles in Foyer and Corridor <i>Carpet tiles wearing.</i>	Estimated: £2k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
Both Centres	Installation of Sound systems in the Millfield Hall, Council Chamber and Thorpe Astley Main Hall. <i>To make the facilities attractive for hire. Some regular hirers have commented that provision of a sound system means there is less need to move equipment or need storage.</i>	Estimated: £6-9k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Short to Medium Term Library Projects		
Project	Details	Notes
Installation of CCTV	<i>Only facility where there are no CCTV cameras. Have been a couple of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour since the Town Council became the Service Operator.</i>	Estimated £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Short to Medium Term General Projects		
Project	Details	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre and Franklin Park Car Parks	Resurfacing/ Relining of Civic Centre, including exploring new handrails and lighting along footpath on entrance slope from Welcome Avenue, and Franklin Park Car Parks. <i>Poor quality of the surface, particularly near entrances and patching is costly and inefficient. Lines are currently fading and can be relined following resurfacing. The slope at the Civic Centre is not well lit and considered steep potentially presenting difficulties for wheel chair users and those who are less able.</i>	Estimated: £80k <i>Annual Capital Budget & Reserves</i> Refresh white lines at Civic Centre in 2024/2025
Gateway signage to the Town on the new road from Lubbesthorpe	The Town Council was responsible for the Town's place signs and would be responsible for installation of such signs at the new gateway and could explore incorporating speed reminders and/or safety messages.	Estimated: £3k <i>Annual Budgets</i>
Provide new, improved and enhanced notice boards at key locations	Over the past few years, many notice boards have fallen into disrepair and have been removed. Some existing notice boards need refurbishment and replacement. Some notice boards are located where there isn't a high level of footfall, while some key locations do not have notice boards.	Rolling programme over 5 years. <i>Annual Budgets</i>
Improved Signage in and around Community Buildings	Signage outdated, not dementia friendly. Sometimes signage not relevant, sometimes doesn't sign/advertise new services. Creation of Corporate Image.	Schedule after Civic Centre improvements. External signs may need planning permission. Estimated: £3-5k. <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
Improvements to Cycle Lock-Up facilities at Community Centres	Cycle lock-up rails are available at both Centres and will be available at the new Shakespeare Pavilion. To encourage cycling and to ensure parked cycles are safe – consider covers, lock ups, better signage and CCTV coverage	Estimated: £5k <i>Maintenance Budget</i>

Medium to Long Term Projects (within the next 12 years)

Medium to Long Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Franklin Park	Improvement items identified by the Franklin Park Working Group: creation of path in orchard (to enable access to lower part when the ground is water logged)	Estimated: £10k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
Mossdale Meadows & Merrileys	Bridle path resurfacing (from Kingsway entrance through to Jelson owned land)	Estimated: £10k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Possible resurfacing of footpaths	<i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>

Medium to Long Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Council Chamber internal refurbishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio / Visual Equipment, including sound and loop system and fixed projector. <i>The facilities need modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars, training and social events.</i>	On-hold pending review and availability of resources and roof replacement Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Civic Centre Kitchens refurbishment <i>Kitchens approximately 40 years old. Poor quality by modern standards and require extra cleaning and maintenance</i>	Estimated: £30k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Millfield Hall and Council Chamber Floor replacement <i>Wooden floors 40 years old and maintenance costs are high. Need to replace with modern low maintenance flooring.</i>	Estimated: £50k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Refurbishment of Millfield Hall Stage Area. <i>Lighting Box, sound system and casing old and constantly needs adjusting, difficult for hirers to use. Stage lighting needs upgrading to LED – can't get replacement bulbs.</i>	Estimated: £30k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Medium to Long Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	Additional Storage for Parks Service <i>Routine items need for maintaining the parks at Thorpe Astley needed. Currently stored at Mossdale. Option allows for reducing time and travel distances.</i>	Costs dependent upon solution. <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Consider options for extending Thorpe Astley Community Centre, including the car park <i>With the success of the Nursery / Pre-School and with the Doctor's Surgery, there is both limited capacity for community meeting space during the weekdays and limited storage.</i>	Costs dependent upon solution. <i>Borrowing</i>

Adopted by Council 25th January 2024 (Minute Reference 6189).



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

RESERVES POLICY

Purpose

1. Braunstone Town Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to ensure that the Council and its services are able to function.
2. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.

Principles

3. Braunstone Town Council will only maintain reserves for the following reasons:
 - a capital receipt from the sale of land or assets to be invested in capital projects identified in the Capital Plan;
 - commuted sums for the transfer of Public Open Spaces to offset significant one-off increases in precept and/or to invest in capital projects identified in the Capital Plan;
 - grants and/or loans received for delivering capital projects identified in the Capital Plan;
 - earmarked funds to meet the Council's Medium Term Financial Forecasts or for unexpected capital expenditure or emergencies;
 - earmarked funds received which are designated for a specific purpose, e.g. donations to the Town Mayor's Charity;
 - a sum approximately equal to 3-6 months of Net Revenue Expenditure should be maintained as the General (non-earmarked) Reserve, in accordance with good practice; and
 - other reserves which are earmarked for special purposes or future development, or to meet commitments, will be maintained as necessary.
4. Where, during and at the end of a financial year, an underspend occurs then the priority is to rebuild balances to ensure there is at least 3 months rather than find alternative spending. Therefore, except where there is a requirement or in exceptional circumstances, the underspend against the annual budget will be used to increase the level of the Council's general fund balances at the end of the financial year.

Scope

5. The Responsible Financial Officer will apply this policy when advising and reporting to Policy & Resources Committee and Council on using, maintaining monitoring and replenishing reserves.
6. Notwithstanding Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; in adopting this Policy, it is the Council's intention that both Policy & Resources

Committee and Council will operate with the framework and comply with the provisions of this policy when making decisions concerning the use, maintenance, monitoring and replenishing of reserves.

Types of Reserve

7. There are two types of reserve:
 - **General (Fund) Reserves** can be used as and when required for purposes determined and approved by the Council; and
 - **Earmarked Reserves** are funds 'ring fenced' for a specific purpose or project; this can either be allocated by the Council or restricted by law or some other conditions (e.g. grant award or donations to the Town Mayor's Charity).

General Fund Reserves

8. The general reserve comprises the Council's cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances.
9. The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide advises that authorities with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should maintain a minimum level of general reserve at three months of net revenue expenditure. The maximum maintained should not exceed twelve months of net revenue expenditure.
10. The Council should review the level general reserve to ensure it is appropriate to the size of operation, situation and risks and should plan the budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained.
11. The minimum level of reserves requires not only consideration of level of income and expenditure but also the risks to that income. Where there is significant self-generated income (other than the precept), the Council should take into account situations that may lead to a loss in revenue as well as increased costs and adapt the general reserve accordingly.

Earmarked Reserves

12. Earmarked Reserves must be held for genuine and identifiable purposes and must be separately identified on the accounts.
13. An "identifiable purpose" includes funds towards delivering the Capital Plan, whether individual identifiable projects or for capital projects generally. However, the amounts earmarked must be justifiable and proportionate.
14. The level of Earmarked Reserves will be subject to review and justification as part of the Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning Process and when setting the annual budget and precept.
15. Subject to the above; there is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to the number or amounts held in Earmarked Reserves.

Monitoring Reserves

16. A summary financial report will be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee, at least quarterly, to include details of reserves and cash held at the bank.
17. The level of general reserve should be reviewed against the budget outturn figure during the financial year and measures identified to ensure that expenditure and income is both monitored and managed where the general reserve falls below the equivalent of three months net expenditure.

Managing Reserves

18. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Policy & Resources Committee as part of the budgetary control process. The exception is where a matter is reserved to Council to determine, in which case Policy & Resources Committee will recommend changes to earmarked reserves for the Council to approve.
19. Earmarked Reserves restricted by law or some other conditions (e.g. grant award or donations to the Town Mayor's Charity) cannot be transferred to the General Fund or Earmarked for another purpose.
20. Earmarked Reserves can be transferred to the General Fund or Earmarked for another purpose where:
 - a) the funds were allocated by Policy & Resources Committee/Council; and
 - b) the funds are not committed (e.g. a completed project which has underspent).
21. During the budget year, unspent amounts in revenue budgets can be moved to an earmarked reserve with the approval of the Policy & Resources Committee, having considered fully forthcoming and ongoing commitments and the implications for public services.

Maintaining Reserves

22. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require local authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
23. While there is no specified minimum level of general reserves; Braunstone Town Council will hold a minimum level of general reserve equivalent to three months of net revenue expenditure.
24. Therefore, the Responsible Financial Officer, when preparing both the Medium Term financial forecast and annual budget estimates, will not propose the use of reserves to meet general expenditure where to do so would result in the level of general fund reserves falling below the equivalent of three months net expenditure.

25. Notwithstanding Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in adopting this Policy, it is the Council's intention that both Policy & Resources Committee and Council, in determining both the Medium Term financial forecast and setting the budget and precept, will not approve the use of reserves to meet general expenditure where to do so would result in the level of general fund reserves falling below the equivalent of three months net expenditure.
26. Where the level of general fund reserve falls or is predicted to fall below the equivalent of three months net expenditure, then the Responsible Financial Officer as part of the Medium Term financial forecast and annual budget setting will put forward proposals to replenish the general fund reserve in the following two financial years.

Review of the Policy

27. This Policy will be reviewed at least annually by Policy & Resources Committee and Council as part of the Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning Report.

DATE ADOPTED	21st March 2024	REVIEW DATE	November 2024
REVISED DATE/S			

Reserve Status

	01/04/24	30/09/24
Earmarked		
Town Mayor's Charity	£2,548.83	£0.00
Earmarked Capital Project		
Civic Centre Capital Plan Priority Projects	£2,055.02	£2,055.02
Earmarked Capital Project		
Carbon Reduction Initiatives	£18,789.00	£18,789.00
Ringfenced - Donation		
Community / Social Inclusion Project Grant	£9,320.98	£8,820.98
Interim arrangements funding		
Shakespeare Park Sports Clubs	£219.94	£219.94
Town Mayor's Charity 2023/24		
Grants: Reducing Loneliness & Isolation	£0.00	£1,500.00
Town Mayor's Charity 2023/24		
Chatty Cafes - Promotion & Publicity	£0.00	£500.00
Town Mayor's Charity 2023/24		
Chatty Cafes - Registration & Expenses	£0.00	£548.83
	<u>£32,933.77</u>	<u>£32,433.77</u>
	<u>£32,933.77</u>	<u>£32,433.77</u>

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 10th OCTOBER 2024 AT 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor Rebecca Lunn (Vice-Chair in the Chair), and Councillors Richard Forrest, Tracey Shepherd, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Marion Waterton and Mark Widdop.

Officers in attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

There were no members of the public present.

35. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Alex Dewinter, Andrew Evans, Sam Fox-Kennedy and Satindra Sangha.

36. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

37. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of submitting a petition and/or making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

38. Minutes of the Meeting held 11th July 2024

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th July 2024 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

39. Town Mayor's Report

The Committee received a report on the activities of the Town Mayor and any proposals for initiatives during the Civic Year (Item 5 on the agenda).

It was noted that Apple Day on 5th October 2024 had been cancelled due to Franklin Park being waterlogged, following significant rainfall in the week running up to the event.

RESOLVED that the update on the Town Mayor's Engagements be noted.

Reason for Decision

To monitor and review the effectiveness of the Town Council's community engagement activities.

40. Crime Statistics

The Committee received the latest crime statistics, including comparative figures (item 6 on the agenda).

The meaning of the rate difference between Braunstone and Leicestershire was confirmed that "Safer" referred to less than the Leicestershire average and "more dangerous" referred to higher than Leicestershire average.

Vehicle Crime was the one area of particular concern. However, Police Sergeant Jay Cooper advised that the level of vehicle crime in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley was similar to areas which had easy access to the main road and motorway network.

RESOLVED that the crime statistics be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To note that overall, Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley had lower rates of crime per head of population compared to that of the Leicestershire Police Force Area as a whole.

41. Community Safety and Neighbourhood Policing Update

The Committee received an update from the Local Neighbourhood Police Beat team on local community safety and policing initiatives.

A copy of the October 2024 Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley Neighbourhood Police Team Newsletter was circulated (filed with these minutes).

Police Sergeant Jay Cooper and Police Constable Fraser Lennox attended the meeting to provide an update on the work of the local police beat team as follows:

- a) The investigation into the incident on Franklin Park on 1st September 2024, which resulted in the death of Mr Kohli, was ongoing and remains an active incident.
- b) Following the incident (see a) above), the local neighbourhood beat team had increased neighbourhood engagement, particularly in the vicinity of Franklin Park. The aim was to capture information to establish whether there were any further incidents or major links, which would need to be addressed. To date, nothing significant had been identified.

- c) Franklin Park was quieter following the incident and this remained the case. However, overall, residents seemed to be getting out and about.
- d) The Team were trying to catch up with day to day work. In respect of Beat Priority 2 “*Obstruction of the Highway, vehicles parking on pavements and across driveways*”, this continued to be of significant concern to residents, particularly in and around schools.

Concerns were raised about knife crime, children carrying knives, and anti-social behaviour being caused in Braunstone Park and Braunstone Town by the same individuals.

In response, Police Sergeant Jay Cooper and Police Constable Fraser Lennox urged that incidents of anti-social behaviour and witnessed knife carrying were reported to the Police. While it was understood that there was an effort involved in reporting incidents, this enabled the police to build up a picture of patterns and therefore target their patrols accordingly. The Police also had arrangements for monitoring habitual knife carriers. The Beat Team worked closely with the Beat Team for Braunstone Park and regularly shared information.

An update on the previous stabbing incident in Thorpe Astley, was requested. The Chief Executive & Town Clerk confirmed that a response had been received from Sergeant Jay Cooper and undertook to ensure that Councillors received a copy.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that current community safety and policing updates were received.

42. Local Area Co-ordination

The Committee received a progress report concerning the priorities and achievements of the Local Area Co-ordination Project in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reasons for Decision

To identify current issues and support needs of residents and ensure that the Town Council and Local Area Co-ordination social inclusion initiatives complimented each other.

43. Town Council Events 2025

The Committee considered initial arrangements, including proposed provisional dates, for Council organised events in 2025 (item 9 on the agenda).

Concerns were raised concerning the communication arrangements when an outdoor event was cancelled due to bad weather or the effects of bad weather on the ground; as had been the case with Apple Day on 5th October 2024. In response, the Chief Executive & Town Clerk undertook to review internal procedures for cancellation of events and the associated communications and publicity.

RESOLVED

1. that the update be noted; and
2. that events in 2025, and the provisional dates, be approved as follows:
 - a) Thorpe Astley on the Beach – Saturday 7th June 2025;
 - b) Summer Fete – Saturday 9th August 2025; and
 - c) Apple Day – Saturday 27th September 2025.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that suitable events and activities be arranged on the Town Council's Parks and Open Spaces.*
2. *To ensure that events would be arranged and promoted in a timely manner.*

44. Outside Body Report: Braunstone West Social Centre

The Committee received an update from Councillor Rebecca Lunn concerning Braunstone West Social Centre. Councillor Lunn had been invited to a meeting; however, it was at 4pm in the afternoon and she had been unable to attend at this time. She would keep in contact with the Social Centre and endeavour to attend meetings where she could.

45. Summary of Grant Applications

The Committee received a list of grants paid and applied for from external sources between April 2024 and September 2024 (Item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To monitor progress with supporting community groups with identifying sources of funding and with the award of grants under the Council's Community Grants scheme.

46. Community Grant Applications

The Committee considered Community Grant Applications which had been received (Item 12 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk confirmed that the Friday Social had previously been awarded a grant as a group under the same name. The group was now part of Braunstone Community Life, who funded the initiative and the Friday Social bank account had been closed and funds transferred to Braunstone Community Life.

RESOLVED that the following grant applications be approved:

- | | |
|--|------|
| a) Braunstone Community Life – Friday Social | £500 |
| b) Winstanley Wizards | £500 |

Reason for Decision

The grant applications met the scheme criteria.

47. Projects to Reduce Loneliness and Isolation

The Committee considered a grant application for a project to reduce loneliness and isolation which has been received (Item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following Reduce Loneliness and Isolation grant application be approved:

- | | |
|--|------|
| a) Braunstone Community Life – Friday Social | £500 |
|--|------|

Reason for Decision

The grant application met the scheme criteria.

48. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

There were no issues identified with income and expenditure to date.

49. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 3rd July 2024 until 1st October 2024 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions, for the period 3rd July 2024 until 1st October 2024, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime and Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;*
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;*
- foster good relations between different groups*

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the currently proposed meeting scheduled for 5th December 2024.

DRAFT

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 31st OCTOBER 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Robert Waterton (Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Nick Brown, Alex DeWinter (substituting for Councillor Sam Maxwell), Richard Forrest, Marion Waterton and Mark Widdop.

Officers in attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

There were nine members of the public present at the meeting.

38. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leanne Lee, Sam Maxwell, Gary Sanders and Darshan Singh.

39. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

40. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may submit a petition and/or attend the meeting for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were nine members of the public present at the meeting.

Seven of the members of the public were concerned about the number of change of use planning applications to turn domestic dwellings into children's homes. Residents in attendance lived either in Stonehurst Road or Mossdale Road. The following points were raised:

- a) impact on the enjoyment of the area, particularly the impact on the quality of life of the occupiers of neighbouring properties;
- b) parking, particularly on a narrow street close to a bend;
- c) impact on property prices;
- d) suitability in some cases of the applicant to provide a children's home;
- e) concerns that many residents had not been notified of applications;
- f) concerns that the planning process was not clear and that many elderly people did not know how to respond to planning consultations, some did not have an email address;
- g) personal anxiety and stress caused by the proposals and the impact a children's home would have on their daily lives;

- h) problems with parking plans, which were often not to scale, and in practice there was insufficient room on site for the number of spaces indicted on such plans; and
- i) the age range of the children to be looked after in the homes.

In response, members of the Committee reassured residents that the Town Council was aware of the situation and was monitoring the number of approved change of use applications for children's homes. It was important to note that change of use was allowed provided there was no significant detriment to amenity. Car parking arrangements were an area that could be considered, particularly where there would be an adverse impact on highway safety. As such the Town Council considered the merits of each application when formulating its consultation response. Some applications were detailed, while others, such as the Stonehurst Road application, provided very little information in respect of how it would operate. A planning statement was essential for the Town Council to understand whether or not the proposal would provide a satisfactory relationship with nearby uses and not have a significant detrimental effect on the amenity enjoyed by residents.

Councillor Robert Waterton advise of the opportunity to hold a meeting with planning officers at Blaby District Council to raise concerns and offered to liaise with the residents concerned and the Head of Planning in order to set the meeting up.

Two members of the public were concerned about application 4, 24/0850/TC, a proposal to fell an area of trees adjacent to the scout hut at the rear of 230 Braunstone Lane; as follows:

- a) the Applicant's Agent had provided the minimum of information required; no reason had been offered for felling an area of mature trees in a Conservation Area;
- b) the 'sketch plan' provided was a small-scale aerial photograph with the relevant area scrawled around with a fat-nibbed red felt-tip pen; it was completely inadequate to identify exactly the area and trees concerned; Government Guidance stated, "The authority is advised to refer a section 211 notice containing insufficient or unclear information back to the person who submitted it";
- c) the Notification stated that the applicant was the owner of the trees; given the historical significance of the Bridle Road, before anything as harmful as the felling of mature trees was allowed to take place in a Conservation Area, the Applicant should be asked to show title to the land and trees; and
- d) there appeared little evidence that interested parties, such as Braunstone Town Council, Leicester City Council and Blaby District Council Planning Policy had been contacted and invited to comment on the proposals.

41. Minutes of the Meetings held 29th August 2024 and 19th September 2024

The Minutes of the meetings held on 29th August 2024 and 19th September 2024 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 29th August 2024 and 19th September 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

42. Planning and Licensing Applications dealt with under Delegated Authority

The Committee received and noted responses to planning and licensing applications taken under Delegated Authority (item 5 on the agenda).

It was noted that delegated for response 13, 24/0814/HH, first-floor side extension and alterations to the ground floor at 27 Kingsway North, that no floor plans or elevations had been available at the time the report had been published (item 5 on the agenda). Subsequently, the floor plans and elevations were made available on the planning portal and the Chief Executive & Town Clerk had submitted the Town Council's consultation response; this was reported to the meeting (see response 13 below).

RESOLVED that the action taken by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk under delegated authority in forwarding the following observations to Blaby District Council be noted:

Planning Applications

- 1. Application No:** 24/0712/FUL

Description: Retrospective application for siting of Inpost Parcel Locker

Location: 440 Braunstone Lane Braunstone Town Leicestershire (St Mary's Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to this application; subject to the existing on-site parking being retained for customer parking and maintained as such in perpetuity.*

Reason: *The Parcel locker provided a pick up point at a local convenience store, supporting its sustainability, while reducing delivery journeys. However, it was important to ensure existing on-site parking would be retained to avoid parking on the highway, close to a junction which could present safety concerns for highway users.*
- 2. Application No:** 24/0700/FUL

Description: Change of use from dwelling house (Use Class C3) to a residential institution (Use Class C2) to accommodate a maximum of 3 children aged 7-17 years

Location: 136 Kingsway Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council recommends that no approval be given to the application until the following details had been submitted in writing:*

- a. number of staff on duty at the property at any one time, including at shift change times, and with associated times;*
- b. details of how professional and personal visits would be managed and the anticipated number and frequency of such visits;*
- c. details of the number and frequency of movements, deliveries, visits, turnover of staff shifts; and*
- d. in relation to a – c above, an explanation of how the existing onsite parking provision for two vehicles would be suitable and not have an adverse impact on highway safety.*

Reason: *The Council supported schemes in principle that would create support for children in a residential rather than institutional setting. However,*

- a. the Planning Application form indicated there were currently eight full time employees at the site and 2 full time and 1 part time employees were proposed; given the proposed change of use from a domestic dwelling, the figures provided needed to be clarified;*
- b. unless the children were from one family, then the number of professional and personal visits would potentially exceed that of a normal domestic dwelling; further understanding of this was needed to assess scale and impact;*
- c. as with any change of use, it was important to assess the potential impact upon the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring properties, particularly in terms of comings and goings, noise and disturbance;*
- d. it was important to avoid additional on street parking, including on the footway and public open space, on the narrow busy highway, which could present highway safety concerns for highway users (including pedestrians).*

3. Application No: 24/0706/FUL

Description: Change of use of existing dwelling (Use Class C3) to a children's home (Use Class C2) for the care of up to three children aged 6 to 14 years.

Location: 18 Stonehurst Road Braunstone Town Leicester (Ravenhurst Ward).

- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council recommends that no approval be given to the application until the following details had been submitted in writing:*
- a. how rotas would be worked out for minimal disruption to the community, including number of staff on duty at the property at any one time, including at shift change times, with associated times;*
 - b. details of how professional and personal visits would be managed and the anticipated number and frequency of such visits;*
 - c. details of the number and frequency of movements, deliveries, visits, turnover of staff shifts; and*
 - d. in relation to a – c above, an explanation of how the proposed onsite parking provision for three vehicles would be suitable and not have an adverse impact on highway safety.*

- Reasons:** *The Council supported schemes in principle that would create support for children in a residential rather than institutional setting. However,*
- a. an understanding of how staffing would be deployed at shift change and to meet the needs of children, would give an indication to the size and scale of the operation and its impact on the local community;*
 - b. unless the children were from one family, then the number of professional and personal visits would potentially exceed that of a normal domestic dwelling; further understanding of this was needed to assess scale and impact;*
 - c. as with any change of use, it was important to assess the potential impact upon the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring properties, particularly in terms of comings and goings, noise and disturbance;*
 - d. it was important to avoid additional on street parking, including on the footway, on the narrow highway at a bend, where access was required to frontages, which could present highway safety concerns for highway users (including pedestrians) and cause obstruction.*

- 4. Application No:** 24/0738/HH
- Description:** Two storey side extension and single storey side and rear extension
- Location:** 26 Charlecote Avenue Braunstone Town Leicester (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*

- 1. at least three off street car parking spaces being provided within the curtilage of the property, being available for use, and retained in perpetuity; and*
- 2. no windows, vents or openings in the side elevation of the extended property without the prior consent of the local planning authority.*

Reason:

- 1. Given the size of the extended property, three off-street parking spaces should be provided in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide.*
- 2. To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

5. Application No: 24/0708/HH

Description: Single storey side extension and front porch including new external materials (revised scheme 24/0029/HH)

Location: 36 Rosamund Avenue Braunstone Town Leicester (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application.*

Reasons: *The proposed extension was adjacent to a highway rather than a neighbouring property and was single storey. Sufficient on-site parking was available for the number of bedrooms.*

6. Application No: 24/0723/HH

Description: Two storey side extension, single storey side and rear extension and internal alterations

Location: 38 The Osiers Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*

- 1. on-site parking, within the curtilage of the property, being provided for at least three vehicles and being available for use in perpetuity;*
- 2. the on-site parking being surfaced with a hardbound material, either permeable or with suitable drainage, and maintained in perpetuity; and*
- 3. no side windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the proposed extension, without the explicit consent of the local planning authority.*

Reasons:

The two-storey extension was proposed for a similar footprint as existing single storey side and rear extensions. The property was on a large well established plot and the proposals were unlikely to have an adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties.

- 1. The number of bedrooms at the property would increase to four. The highway was narrow and any additional highway parking would cause obstruction, including on the footway, causing risks to the safety of users, particularly pedestrians. The Google Street View taken in October 2022 shows a vehicle parked outside the property obstructing the footpath. Similar occurrences could be seen along the same stretch of road.*
- 2. To ensure that suitable parking would be provided and to avoid adding to flooding on the highway during periods of heavy and prolonged rainfall.*
- 3. To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

7. Application No: 24/0778/HH

Description:

Two storey side and two and single storey rear extension and canopy to front

Location:

15 Radford Drive Braunstone Town Leicester (St Mary's Ward)

Response:

Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:

- 1. on-site parking, including the garage space, being provided for at least three vehicles and being available for use in perpetuity;*
- 2. the proposed side window in the first floor of the side extension being of opaque glass and non-opening; and*
- 3. no additional side windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the proposed extension, without the explicit consent of the local planning authority.*

Reasons:

The two-storey extensions were proposed for a similar footprint as existing single storey side and rear extensions. The property was on a large well established plot and the proposals were unlikely to have an adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties.

- 1. To avoid additional parking on the highway, including the footway, which could present safety issues to highway users, particularly pedestrians.*

2. *To allow for natural light to enter the property, while avoiding the neighbouring side entry being overlooked.*
3. *To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

8. Application No: 24/0753/FUL

Description: Change of use from dwelling house (Use Class C3) to residential children's home (Use Class C2) to accommodate a maximum of three children under the age of 18 years old and the inclusion of a bin store and cycle shelter

Location: 82 Mossdale Road Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposed change of use; subject to:*

1. *no more than three children (between the age of 8 and 18) to be resident at any one time;*
2. *no more than two members of staff should be on duty at any one time, with the exception of shift change over;*
3. *the existing on-site car parking facilities for at least three vehicles (as detailed on the proposed block plan) and the proposed cycle storage being permanently available for use;*
4. *the arrangements set out in the submitted Planning Statement, from Osman Design Partnership Ltd, in particular the section "The Proposal" – car parking, staff pick up, staff shift change, visitors and planned appointments, being implemented and strictly adhered to; and*
5. *prior to first occupation as a residential children's home, the proposed wall lining upgrade to the party wall, as detailed in the submitted Noise Impact Assessment, should be installed and thereafter retained.*

Reasons: *The Council supported schemes in principle that would create support for children in a residential rather than institutional setting. However, these should not be at the expense of the residential amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties and the local community. The applicant had submitted a detailed planning statement concerning the aims and operation of the proposed children's home and how any impact on the residential area would be mitigated.*

1. *The comings and goings and number of visits at the children's home would be directly related to*

the number of resident children. Any increase would need to be properly assessed to determine whether there would be an impact on residential amenity.

- 2. To ensure that the size and scale of the operation would not have an adverse effect on the amenity enjoyed by the neighbouring properties in terms of comings and goings.*
- 3. To avoid additional on street parking, including on the footway, on the narrow highway close to a junction, which could present highway safety concerns for highway users (including pedestrians).*
- 4. As with any change of use, it was important to mitigate the potential impact upon the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring properties, particularly in terms of comings and goings, noise and disturbance.*
- 5. To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the adjoining property in terms of noise.*

9. Application No: 24/0795/FUL

Description: Retention of temporary building and 3 containers (Use class B1(c) light industrial) installed under a previous application 21/1504/FUL

Location: Unit 5 Vitruvius Way Merdian Business Park Braunstone Town (Thorpe Astley Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the retention of the temporary building and three containers, provided that the number of employees was limited to 3 (as detailed in the application form) and, therefore, the number of on-site parking spaces could be reduced to 8 (as detailed in the application form).*

Reasons: *The buildings and containers were considered to be in keeping with the character, use and appearance of the employment area. However, in the interests of highway safety, it was important to ensure that the number of on-site parking spaces retained on the site was proportionate to the number of employees and visitors. Thereby avoiding additional parking on the highway.*

10. Application No: 24/0726/FUL

Description: Proposed demolition of existing garages and erection of two storey commercial unit

Location: Land Adj to 109 Ravenhurst Road Braunstone Town
Leicester LE3 2PW (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council objects to the proposals, due to:*

1. *the design and appearance of the two storey commercial unit not being in keeping with the character and appearance of the area; and*
2. *insufficient information provided concerning:*
 - a) *vehicle parking,*
 - b) *waste storage and collection,*
 - c) *employment, and*
 - d) *hours of opening.*

Reasons:

1. *The area contained 1940s/1950s character semi-detached properties. These properties had a consistent design and appearance, while containing different character features. While it was accepted that the site in question contained garages, these weren't sufficiently different to be out of keeping. The nearby retail units retain similar character design and appearance to the surrounding residential dwellings. However, the proposed commercial units would be out of keeping in terms of the contemporary design, including the design of the first floor and roof, and with the retention of two existing garages.*
2. *The submitted application form and design and access statements were incomplete or inconsistent, particularly in respect of:*
 - a) *vehicle parking – no details have been provided of the number of spaces, the Design and Access Statement suggests that vehicles could park on the street, however, this was a narrow highway, close to a bend, which presented highway safety concerns;*
 - b) *waste storage and collection – no details provided; however, the intended use would result in waste being created and therefore, arrangements needed to be made for its storage and collection;*
 - c) *employment – the application suggests no employees at the site, which contradicts the intended use; the design and access statement refers to staff but does not provide any numbers, such information was required to assess the impact on the residential amenity in terms of noise and comings and goings; and*
 - d) *hours of opening – no details provided in the application, while the Design and Access Statement only provided for approximate timings; actual timings would be needed to assess the impact upon residential amenity.*

- 11. Application No:** 24/0812/FUL
- Description:** Retrospective application for siting of InPost Parcel Locker
- Location:** 1 Monica Road Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council does not object to this application; subject to the existing on-site parking being retained for customer parking and maintained as such in perpetuity.*
- Reason:** *The Parcel locker provided a pick up point at a local pharmacy, supporting its sustainability, while reducing delivery journeys. However, it was important to ensure existing on-site parking would be retained to avoid parking on the highway, close to a junction which could present safety concerns for highway users.*
- 12. Application No:** 24/0827/OUT
- Description:** Erection of one dwelling (outline application with details of access and layout)
- Location:** 2 Freeboard Road Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council objects to this application due to the proposed development resulting in:*
- (a) overdevelopment of the site due to consideration of scale and mass; and*
 - (b) insufficient amenity space for both the new and existing dwelling.*
- Reasons:**
- (a) The proposed dwelling's size on a small plot would result in it being built in close proximity to both 33 Woodcote Road and 2 Freeboard Road resulting in cramped living conditions.*
 - (b) The proposed dwelling was built on the existing garage and amenity space for 2 Freeboard Road and the creation of the new dwelling would result in cramped living conditions for both dwellings which would have little useable amenity space.*
- 13. Application No:** 24/0814/HH
- Description:** First-floor side extension and alterations to the ground floor
- Location:** 27 Kingsway North Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*

- 1. on-site parking, including the garage space, being provided for at least three vehicles and being available for use in perpetuity;*
- 2. the proposed side window in the ground floor of the side extension being of opaque glass; and*
- 3. no additional side windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the proposed extension, without the explicit consent of the local planning authority.*

Reasons: *The first floor side extension was proposed for a similar footprint as the existing single storey side extension. The property was on a large well established plot and the proposals were unlikely to have an adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties.*

- 1. The proposals involved an extra bedroom; therefore, in accordance with the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide, a minimum of three onsite parking spaces should be provided to avoid additional parking on the narrow highway, including the footway, close to two schools, which could present safety issues to highway users, particularly pedestrians.*
- 2. To allow for natural light to enter the property, while providing for privacy.*
- 3. To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

14. Application No: 24/0762/FUL

Description: Minor changes to elevations to include under eaves extensions for improvements to the operations at the store, amendments to the access to the site to improve traffic flow with new goal post height restrictor and associated works to the site

Location: Mcdonalds Restaurant Meridian East Meridian Business Park Braunstone Town (Thorpe Astley Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application.*

Reasons: *The proposed extensions and alterations were in keeping with the site use and could be accommodated without impacting upon parking or site movements.*

- 15. Application No:** 24/0841/HH
- Description:** Proposed single storey front, side, and rear extension (including demolition of existing car port) and conversion of garage to study
- Location:** 13 Farmway Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*
1. *on-site parking for at least two vehicles being of a hardbound permeable material or with suitable drainage and being available for parking in perpetuity; and*
 2. *no windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the proposed extension without the explicit consent of the local planning authority.*
- Reasons:** *The dwelling was on a reasonable size plot and the proposed alterations were on a similar footprint to existing outbuildings; however:*
1. *it was important to avoid additional on-street parking on the narrow street and to avoid additional surface water run-off on to the highway; and*
 2. *to protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

Licensing Applications

There were no licensing applications to consider.

43. Planning Applications and Licensing Applications

The Committee received details of a planning application to be considered by Blaby District Council (item 6 on the agenda). The Committee noted that there were no licensing applications.

RESOLVED that the following response be forwarded to Blaby District Council:

1. **Application No:** 24/0859/FUL
- Description:** Retrospective application for siting of InPost Parcel Locker and application for 2m extension to existing
- Location:** ATM at Co op Turnbull Drive Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Millfield Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council does not object to this application.*

Reason: *The Parcel locker provided a pick up point at a local convenience store, supporting its sustainability, while reducing delivery journeys. The location was accessible on foot, on a bus route, and there was sufficient parking availability.*

44. Additional Planning and Licensing Applications

The Committee received details of additional planning applications to be considered by Blaby District Council (item 7 on the agenda). The Committee noted that there were no licensing applications.

RESOLVED that the following responses be forwarded to Blaby District Council:

2. **Application No:** 24/0835/HH
- Description:** Single storey front, side and rear extensions, first floor side extension, conversion of garage, external rendering and erection of front boundary wall with automatic metal gate and associated alterations
- Location:** 516 Braunstone Lane Braunstone Town Leicester (St. Mary's Ward)
- Response:**
1. *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the Single storey front, side and rear extensions, first floor side, and conversion of garage; subject to:*
 - a) *on-site parking, within the curtilage of the property, being provided for at least three vehicles and being available for use in perpetuity;*
 - b) *the on-site parking being surfaced with a hardbound material, either permeable or with suitable drainage, and maintained in perpetuity; and*
 - c) *no side windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the proposed extension, without the explicit consent of the local planning authority; and*
 2. *Braunstone Town Council objects to the proposed front boundary wall and automatic sliding metal gate; due to considerations of:*
 - a) *not being in keeping with the character and appearance of the area;*
 - b) *impacting on the operation of the highway; and*
 - c) *potentially detrimental to the safety of highway users (including users of the footpath).*
- Reasons:**
1. *The property was on a large well-established and landscaped plot, similar extensions had been carried out at neighbouring properties and the proposals were unlikely to have an adverse impact*

on the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties; nevertheless:

- a) *the number of bedrooms at the property would increase to four; the highway was a narrow main road and any additional highway parking would cause obstruction, including on the footway, causing risks to the safety of users, particularly pedestrians;*
 - b) *it was important to ensure that suitable parking would be provided and to avoid adding to flooding on the highway during periods of heavy and prolonged rainfall; and.*
 - c) *to protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*
2. *Common boundary treatments on this stretch of Braunstone Lane consisted of either hedgerow or low level walls and fences with no gates; as such:*
- a) *installation of a 1.8 metre high wall and metal gate would result in a discordant element to the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider area;*
 - b) *there was no room for a vehicle entering the property to wait while the gate opened, therefore it would obstruct the operation of the busy highway and footpath;*
 - c) *vehicles leaving the property would not have a sufficient view of the footpath when pulling out; presenting safety concerns for footpath users.*

3. **Application No:** 24/0898/FUL
- Description:** Retention of change of use from former veterinary surgery to Beauty Salon and Barbers
- Location:** 106 Edward Avenue Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council has no objections to the change of use application.*
- Reason:** *The proposed use was in keeping with the designation of the area as a Neighbourhood Parade (covered under Development Management Policy 6). While the proposed use was not one of the categories listed in the policy; neither was a veterinary surgery. As such, the use of the premises as a beauty salon and barbers was considered ancillary to the Neighbourhood Parade and would support its sustainability.*

4. **Application No:** 24/0850/TC

Description: Fell area of trees adjacent to house and scout hut

Location: Rear of 230 Braunstone Lane Braunstone Town
Leicester (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council objects to the application since:*

- 1. the application does not clearly identify the exact number of trees to be removed, their species or the reason for removal (the latter not being mandatory but advised); and*
- 2. the removal of the trees would be contrary to the Braunstone Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan.*

Therefore, Braunstone Town Council recommends that a Tree Preservation Order should be made to protect the mature and established trees in the area alongside the historic Lubbesthorpe Bridle Path between Main Street/Braunstone Lane and Shakespeare Park.

Reasons:

- 1. The 'sketch plan' provided was a small-scale aerial photograph with the proposed area scrawled around with a fat-nibbed red felt-tip pen; it did not sufficiently identify the trees to be felled, or the species.*
- 2. The proposed area included mature and established trees, which were potentially over 100 years old. These trees formed part of a character row, along with trees on the opposite side of Braunstone Lane, which were located in the heart of the historic village, adjacent to and visible from Main Street (Braunstone Lane), the historic bridle route (Lubbesthorpe Bridle Path), a listed building (former Shakespeare Pub) and Shakespeare Park. Paragraph 8 of the Character Appraisal referring to Townscape stated that its "character is reinforced by the green and leafy appearance of the Conservation Area. Where they are present, mature trees, natural boundary treatments and soft verges make a positive contribution to the significance of the area". Section 12 of the Management Plan sets out the importance of retaining and planting trees and requires "a presumption in favour of retaining trees which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area".*

5. **Application No:** 24/0723/HH
- Description:** Two-storey side and rear, and single-storey side and rear extensions and internal alterations (amended description and drawings received 28.10.2024)
- Location:** 38 The Osiers Braunstone Town Leicester (Millfield Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*
- 1. on-site parking, within the curtilage of the property, being provided for at least three vehicles and being available for use in perpetuity;*
 - 2. the on-site parking being surfaced with a hardbound material, either permeable or with suitable drainage, and maintained in perpetuity; and*
 - 3. no side windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the proposed extension, without the explicit consent of the local planning authority.*
- Reasons:** *The two-storey extension was proposed for a similar footprint as existing single storey side and rear extensions. The property was on a large well-established plot and the proposals were unlikely to have an adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties.*
- 1. The number of bedrooms at the property would increase to four. The highway was narrow and any additional highway parking would cause obstruction, including on the footway, causing risks to the safety of users, particularly pedestrians. The Google Street View taken in October 2022 shows a vehicle parked outside the property obstructing the footpath. Similar occurrences could be seen along the same stretch of road.*
 - 2. To ensure that suitable parking would be provided and to avoid adding to flooding on the highway during periods of heavy and prolonged rainfall.*
 - 3. To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

45. Planning Decisions

The Committee received and noted planning decisions made by Blaby District Council (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the planning decisions made by Blaby District Council be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep a watching brief on the decisions and to review the impact of Town Council comments upon the decision making process.

46. Feedback on Planning Application Decisions

The Committee received a copy of the Planning Case Officer Delegated Decision in respect of the following planning decisions:

- 23/1006/HH; two storey side extension and two single storey rear extension including demolition of existing outbuilding (revised scheme to 22/1006/HH) at 31 Headley Road (item 9A);
- 23/1024/HH; two storey side extension, first floor side and rear extension; at 132 Kingsway (item 9B); and
- 24/0339/HH; two storey side extension and single storey side and rear extension; at 7 Edward Avenue (item 9C).

RESOLVED that the feedback concerning planning decisions:

- a) 23/1006/HH, 31 Headley Road,
 - b) 23/1024/HH, 132 Kingsway, and
 - c) 24/0339/HH, 7 Edward Avenue;
- be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure consistency of approach when applying conditions relating to off-road parking.

47. Braunstone Village Conservation Area Proposals

The Committee received a report on the designation of an area of Braunstone Village to the South of Braunstone Lane as a Conservation Area (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the designation of the part of Braunstone Village to the South of Main Street/Braunstone Lane as a conservation area on 24th September 2024, complimenting the existing Conservation Area on the northern side of Main Street/Braunstone Lane, be welcomed, and
2. that the *Next Steps* as set out in the report be endorsed.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To preserve and enhance the whole of Braunstone Village due to its special historic and architectural interest given there was evidence of incremental change, with the loss of more traditional building features and materials, as well as small scale developments that are more visually harmful; the area was close to a tipping point in terms of this change, with*

the expanded permitted development rights for non-listed properties providing a heightened risk.

2. *To recognise that designation of the Conservation Area was the first step in ensuring that the special character of Braunstone Village would be protected and enhanced in the medium to long term.*

48. Air Quality Monitoring Annual Status Report 2024

The Committee received the Blaby District Air Quality Monitoring Annual Status Report for consideration (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that it be suggested to Blaby District Council that they purchase a mobile Zephyr.

Reason for Decision

To assess whether black particles found on properties was particulate matter.

49. Neighbourhood Planning

The Committee reviewed the position concerning whether the Town should be designated as a Neighbourhood for the purposes of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that Braunstone Town Council does not undertake a Neighbourhood Plan or any of the Neighbourhood Planning tools at the present time.

Reason for Decision

Successful Neighbourhood Planning required the leadership and involvement of the Town Council and Town Councillors and an indication of a wider community desire to undertake neighbourhood planning. While there was some evidence of support, this was not sufficiently widespread to justify the resources to facilitate the process, including engaging the community and making the necessary applications and applying for funding. Key areas such as Open Spaces and Neighbourhood Shopping Areas are protected by existing policies. Areas of historic or special character, such as Braunstone Village, is protected and enhanced by a Conservation Area designation and an Article 4 Direction is proposed to further restrict permitted development rights for non-listed properties in Braunstone Village.

50. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

There were no issues of concern with the income and expenditure against the budget for 2024/2025.

51. Approval of Accounts

The Committee received payments from 21st August 2024 until 17th October 2024 (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the Period 21st August 2024 until 17th October 2024 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the currently proposed meeting scheduled for 12th December 2024.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 7th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair) and Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andy Evans, Rebecca Lunn, Gary Sanders and Robert Waterton.

Officers in Attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

42. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Leanne Lee, Sam Maxwell, Tracey Shepherd and Christiane Startin-Lorent.

43. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by members.

44. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of submitting a petition and/or making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

45. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2024 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

46. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

While utilities expenditure was over budget, this would be partly off-set by a new tariff agreement later in the year. Staff salaries and on-costs were on target for the period, taking into account that the back pay for the pay rise would be paid later in the month. In addition, facilities income was higher. Therefore, the Council's net expenditure for the period was on target.

47. End of Quarter Financial Position – Income, Expenditure, Cash and Balances

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Income, Expenditure, Cash and Balances for the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (item 6 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk reported that the Council had £521,409 in cash at the bank on 31st October 2024. This was £38,216 higher than the £483,193 included in the Cash Flow Forecast considered by the Committee on 13th June and 12th September 2024.

RESOLVED

1. that the end of quarter financial position to 30th September 2024, as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3, be noted; and
2. that it be noted that *Cash at the Bank* remained on target compared to the projections considered by the Committee in June 2024 and September 2024, as detailed in the relevant section of the report.

Reasons for Decision

1. *There were no issues of concern with management of the Council's Finances.*
2. *The forecasts considered in June 2024 and September 2024 were on track; however, this was based on using cash reserves towards the end of the financial year prior to receipt of precept income.*

48. Cash Flow Forecast

The Committee received an updated cash flow forecast, following the end of quarter financial position report to 30th September 2024, and considered appropriate contingency measures to address any overspend or loss of income (item 7 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk reported that the actual closing cash balance on 31st October 2024 was £521,409, which was slightly higher than the £518,170 predicted when the revised Cash Flow forecast had been drafted.

RESOLVED

1. that the position in respect of *Staff Salaries, Income and Expenditure*, and *Cash Flow Forecast*, be noted;
2. that detailed work be undertaken on the 2025/2026 staff salaries estimates (including employer national insurance contributions and employer pension contributions);
3. that provision be made in the 2025/2026 budget estimates for an increase in Insurance costs; and
4. that the updated Cash Flow Forecast, as set out at Appendix 1, be endorsed.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The 2024 Salary settlement had been approved and overspends on utilities were being offset by increased facilities income.*
2. *To ensure that annual increments, national insurance increases and a likely increase in employer pension contributions, were all taken into account.*
3. *The cost of Insurance had typically risen by around 5%.*
4. *The forecast had been revised taking into account the actual income and expenditure against the budget, for the first 6 months of the financial year.*

49. **Options for Reducing Expenditure and Increasing Income**

The Committee considered options for increasing income and reducing expenditure for the period up to April 2025 (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the £6,000 of further expenditure savings, identified in the *Proposed Contingency Plans* section of the report be approved and then reviewed in January 2025 following the end of the third quarter (31st December 2024); and
2. that the approach to proactively promote regular available slots in the Council's Community Centres be endorsed.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To identify expenditure which could be paused while the direction of travel concerning the Council's income, expenditure and cash balances was monitored.*
2. *To maintain and further increase facilities income.*

50. **Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning**

The Committee received a report, which set out the context for the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (item 9 on the agenda).

The Committee noted that interest rates had been cut from 5% to 4.75%; while inflation had fell below the Bank of England's 2% target in the year to September 2024. However, the Bank expected CPI inflation to be between 2% and 3% over the next couple of years.

The Committee also noted that Employer's National Insurance contributions would rise by 1.2% to 15% in April 2025, along with a lowering of the threshold at which payments were made from £9,100 per annum to £5,000. While the Employment Allowance had been increased, this did not apply to public bodies. An initial estimate of the additional costs to the Council was approximately £2,500 in 2025/2026, which had been built into the projection at Appendix 1 of the report.

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, be approved;
2. that the Council's Strategic Aims, Delivery Objectives and Committee/Service Objectives, attached at Appendix 2, be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought;
3. that once the revenue reserve reaches the equivalent of three months' net expenditure; the additional funds be earmarked to invest in infrastructure and assets, as identified in the Capital Plan at Appendix 3, and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations;
4. that the Financial, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted;
5. that the Reserves Policy, attached at Appendix 4, be approved; and
6. that the Earmarked Reserves be confirmed, as set out at Appendix 5.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2025/2026 and beyond.*
2. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties.*
3. *To maintain the standard of the council's facilities and open spaces and to ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.*
4. *To effectively manage the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, taking into account the associated risks.*
5. *To ensure the financial resilience of the Council, that it would be able to function, invest in its assets and deliver services to residents; while avoiding significant increases in council tax precept in future years.*
6. *To ensure that reserves earmarked relate only to a commitment or a restricted use; maximising the level of funds to replenish the revenue (general fund) reserve.*

51. **Carbon Reduction Initiative: installation of Solar PV Battery Storage**

The Committee considered options, proposals, costs, financial savings and the impact on the Council's Carbon footprint of installing battery storage for the Solar PV (item 10 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk advised that the cost of installing battery storage for the Solar PV at Braunstone Civic Centre was £21,000. An application would need to be made to National Grid and therefore, it was anticipated that installation would take place in January 2025.

RESOLVED

1. that the proposals concerning *Battery Storage* for Braunstone Civic Centre's Solar PV system, as set out in the respective section of the report, along with the proposed design detailed at Appendix 1, be approved;
2. that the position with the *Finance*, as set out in the relevant section of the report be received and noted and that the installation saving, and balance of Public Works Loan, of £18,789, be put towards the costs of battery storage; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to approve a scheme for installing battery storage to the solar PV panels at the Council's facilities, as appropriate, provided the total cost of the scheme did not exceed £25,000 (excluding VAT).

Reasons for Decision

1. *To deliver the Council's Climate Change & Environmental Objectives, reduce the Council's Carbon footprint, make savings and generate revenue.*
2. *To note the underspend from the installations in 2023 was allocated to battery storage options to further reduce the Council's carbon footprint.*
3. *To fully assess the options, proposals, costs, financial savings and impact on the Council's carbon footprint, and to ensure installation works could be carried out without further delay.*

52. **Improvements to Walking and Cycle Routes**

The Committee received an update on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the updated programme for the delivery of improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes, be noted.

Reason for Decision

The scheme would provide improvements for pedestrians and cyclists

connecting facilities, amenities and communities across Braunstone Town, Meridian and Thorpe Astley.

53. Thorpe Astley Park Culvert

The Committee received an update on interim works to address safety, and timescales for the works to replace the culvert and pedestrian bridge over Lubbesthorpe Brook at Thorpe Astley Park (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that an update be obtained from Persimmon Homes regarding their plans to undertake further work to the culvert bridge in the 2025/2026 financial year;
2. that investigations be undertaken to confirm the ownership of the culvert and bridge over Lubbesthorpe Brook at Thorpe Astley Park and the transfer of the Thorpe Astley Park from Blaby District Council to Braunstone Town Council; and
3. that a report, detailing the:
 - a) legal position with both the park and culvert,
 - b) nature of the flooding and drainage problems on the lower part of the site (adjacent to the new parkland),and setting out options and proposals, be submitted to a meeting of Policy & Resources Committee by April 2025 for consideration.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To confirm if Persimmon Homes propose to carry out further work to the culvert bridge.*
2. *To ensure that the Town Council's desire to complete the transfer of Thorpe Astley Park, a significant asset that should be owned by the Town Council, without further delays and additional cost.*
3. *To ensure that the Council had fully investigated ownership, risks and implications, including the flooding and drainage issues, prior to commencing transfer negotiations.*

54. Park & Open Spaces Winter Works Programme 2024/2025

The Committee considered items on the Winter Works Programme for 2024/225 for the Councils Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Winter Works Programme 2024/2025, attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that parks and open spaces in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley were maintained to a high level.

55. Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings – Consultation

The Committee received details of a consultation by the Department of Housing Communities and Local Government concerning remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings; and determined whether the Town Council should submit a response to the consultation (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following consultation response be submitted to the Department of Housing Communities and Local Government:

1	In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?	b) A council body: Town or Parish Council
2	Do you agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities powers to allow remote attendance at formal meetings?	Yes
3	If you answered 'Yes' to question 2, do you think that there should be specific limitations on remote attendance?	d) Individual Councils should be given the power to decide whether to permit remote attendance and determine how it would work. The Council's Constitution / Standing Orders should clearly set out the circumstances and the process.
4	If you are an elected member, can you anticipate that you personally may seek to attend some of your council meetings remotely?	I am not an elected member
5	If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of a council as a whole, what proportion of the council's current elected members are likely to seek to attend council meetings remotely over the course of a year?	Less than 10%
6	The government recognises that there may be cases in which it is necessary for councils to hold meetings fully remotely. Do you think there should be limitations placed on the number of fully remote meetings councils should be able to hold?	The circumstances and arrangements should be set out clearly in the Standing Orders / Constitution.
7	Do you think there are there any necessary procedural measures that would help to ensure a remote or hybrid attendance policy is workable and efficient?	a) Councils should be required to publish a list of attendees joining the meeting remotely and give notice if a meeting is being held with full remote attendance.

		<p>b) Councils should be required to ensure that standard constitutional arrangements are followed for hybrid and fully remote meetings</p> <p>c) Councils should be required to make arrangements to ensure restricted items (where a council decision is taken in private to protect confidentiality) are managed appropriately and to require remotely attending members to join from a private location</p> <p>d) The members in attendance will ultimately need to be satisfied that confidentiality can be maintained. Standing Orders should clearly set this out.</p>
8	Do you think legislative change to allow councillors to attend local authority meetings remotely should or should not be considered for the following reasons?	<p>Should be considered because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a positive modernising measure • It would likely increase the diversity of people willing and able to stand for election in their local area, making councils more representative of the communities they serve • Councils would be more resilient in the event of local or national emergencies which prevent in-person attendance
		<p>Should not be considered because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be more difficult for councillors to build personal working relationships with colleagues, and engage with members of the public in attendance at meetings
9	In your view, would allowing councillors to attend formal local authority meetings remotely according to their needs particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics? For example, those with disabilities or caring responsibilities.	It would benefit members

Proxy voting		
10	In addition to provisions allowing for remote attendance, do you consider that it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting?	No
11	If yes, for which of the following reasons which may prohibit a member's participation in council meetings do you consider it would be appropriate?	N/A
12	Are there circumstances in which you feel proxy voting would not be appropriate?	All circumstances. A Councillor should consider the debate and discussions, including the advice of officers, prior to making a decision and voting. While the meeting papers and recommendations will be sent out in advance (not all parish councils will have a system of reports and officer recommendations); the question being put to the vote will not necessarily be the same following discussion and debate.
13	If you think proxy voting is appropriate, are there any limitations you think should be placed upon it?	N/A

56. Complaints Monitoring

The Committee received details of formal complaints dealt with and determined as a result whether policy or procedural changes are required to ensure that future reoccurrence is minimised (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

The Procedure by including all complaints, whether minor or major, simple of complex, and providing for the informal stage, to deal with these as appropriate, results in complaints being resolved and/or closed effectively.

57. Officers' Code of Conduct

The Committee considered, following consultation, proposed revisions to the Council's Officers' Code of Conduct to ensure that it remained fit for purpose (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the proposed revisions to the Officers' Code of Conduct, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and implemented from Monday 11th November 2024.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the highest standards of conduct from all Town Council employees. The Code outlines existing law, regulations and conditions of service and provides further guidance to assist managers and employees in their day-to-day work.

58. Review of Lone Working Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Lone Working Policy & Procedure and to approve these for consultation (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that, subject to paragraph 6a reading "people in fixed establishments where only one person works on the premises, who work separately from others and who work outside normal office hours...", the proposed revisions to the Lone Working Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor, as detailed in the *Timescales and Implementation* section of the report; and
2. that any proposed amendments be presented to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 16th January 2025 for consideration and approval.

Reason for Decision

1. *To ensure that staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor could input into the proposed changes to the Lone Working Policy & Procedure to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.*
2. *To raise awareness of the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person had in this situation, and to give guidance on how to manage such risks.*

59. Sexual and General Harassment Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered a proposed Sexual and General Harassment Policy & Procedure for interim implementation and consultation, subject to consideration and adoption at the next scheduled meeting (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed Sexual & General Harassment Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, subject to the following amendments:

- a) the word “professional” in paragraph 17 reading “professionally”, and
- b) the reference in paragraph 26 to the above named person, referencing paragraph 25,
be approved for interim adoption with immediate effect;
2. that the interim Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1, as amended, be the subject of consultation, as detailed in the *Consultation* section of the report; and
3. that a post-consultation version of the Sexual & General Harassment Policy & Procedure be submitted to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 16th January 2025, for consideration and adoption.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To take steps to reduce the risk of harassment taking place in the workplace.*
2. *To ensure that that policy & procedure, was practical and fit for purpose and met the needs of staff, reducing the risk of harassment in the workplace.*
3. *To ensure that the Council had robust Policies, Procedures and measures in place and raised awareness; including defining what constituted harassment, steps to take should the problem arise, protection the Organisation would provide to those reporting it, and sanctions against offenders.*

60. External Audit 2023/2024

The Committee noted that the External Audit was completed on the 20th September 2024 and confirmed that for the year ended 31st March 2024, the Town Council’s Annual Governance and Accountability Return was in accordance with the Proper Practices and that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that it be noted that the External Audit 2023/2024 was completed on 20th September 2024 and that no matters were raised concerning the Town Council’s accounts and governance arrangements for the year ended 31st March 2024; and
2. that the comments of the External Auditor in respect of the Reserves be received and considered as part of the Council’s annual review of its Medium Term Financial Planning and the setting of the annual budget and council tax precept.

Reasons for Decision

1. *An unqualified opinion was given by the External Auditor, Moore East Midlands, on the Council’s Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/2024.*
2. *The Council had noted that its reserves were getting lower and had*

identified this as a potential risk to the Town Council's ability to maintain its current level of operations and services; the Council's Medium Term Priorities and Financial Strategy and Reserves Policy set out the framework for restoring the level of general fund cash reserves.

61. Outside Bodies Report

The Committee received reports from members of Outside Bodies:

a) Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils

No Report due to no recent meeting.

b) Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Association

No Report due to no recent meeting.

62. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 4th September 2024 until 29th October 2024 (item 21 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 4th September 2024 until 29th October 2024 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.

63. Mosssdale Meadows Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Commercial Interest*

The Committee received an update on timescales and proposed financing for rebuilding the Culvert and carrying out flood alleviation and drainage improvements to Mosssdale Meadows (item 22 on the agenda).

A summary of the public consultation responses received, regarding the proposals and priorities, was circulated (filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the comments received from the public consultation be collated and considered and, where appropriate, included in the proposed works,
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to:

- a) determine the detailed arrangements, timings and work schedules,
 - b) make minor modifications to the design and installation proposals within the delegated spending limits allowed under paragraph 11.1i of the Financial Regulations,
 - c) award the contract; and
3. that the updated draft timeline for required work be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. To ensure that the residents were fully informed and able to comment on any proposed work to be undertaken by the Town Council.
2. To ensure that the work to the Flood Alleviation Scheme could be undertaken in a timely manner.
3. To provide a plan of works to be carried out and target dates to work towards.

64. Improvements to Impey Close Play Area and Open Space

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee received financing options for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Play Area and received an update concerning options for refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Open Space (item 23 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that grant funding sources be investigated to help towards the cost of the proposed work on the Impey Close Playground Refurbishment;
2. that investigations be undertaken for the hire of equipment to repair gravel paths at Impey Close open space by Braunstone Town Council staff; and
3. that the amended timescales for the project be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. To ensure that all sources of funding towards the cost of the project would be considered.
2. To note that no tender applications had been received from appropriate contractors to undertake repairs to the gravel path but suitable equipment may be available to hire for Council staff to undertake the work.
3. To provide a suitable timescale for the project to be undertaken.

65. Land adjacent to the New M1 Bridge, Thorpe Astley

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to

withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Commercial Interest and Legal Advice.*

The Committee received an update concerning proposals for transferring the land adjacent to the new road and bridge at Thorpe Astley to the Town Council (item 24 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that it be noted that the land transfer process was underway; and
2. that the risk assessment of site, including the boundary with the Motorway, and identified mitigating actions, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *Both parties had appointed solicitors who had commenced the transfer process.*
2. *To ensure that the Council assessed the level of risk to public safety and took mitigating action where necessary.*

66. Wayleave/Easement – Thorpe Astley Community Centre and Park

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Commercial Interest and Legal Advice.*

The Committee received an update on Wayleave/Easement Consent for an underground high voltage cable under Thorpe Astley Community Centre Car Park and Thorpe Astley Park (item 25 on the agenda)

RESOLVED

1. that the principle of entering into an agreement with Applegreen to install an underground high voltage cable at Thorpe Astley Community Centre and Park be on the basis of the *Approved Way Forward*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, and subject to terms and conditions; be reaffirmed;
2. that the *Correspondence to Blaby District Council*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be supported and form the basis of the Town Council's proposed way forward; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to undertake negotiations on terms and conditions for an agreement.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To facilitate proposals for the installation of Electric Vehicle Rapid Chargers at Leicester Forest East Service Station.*
2. *To ensure that the Council delivers its responsibilities to improve and*

- enhance public services at Thorpe Astley.*
3. *To enable an acceptable solution to be agreed, without delay.*

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting scheduled on 16th January 2025.